

RENAISSANCE

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T. S. Eliot's Poetry: The Quest and the Way

BY JOHN B. VICKERY

(Continued from the previous issue)

PART I of this study suggested that T. S. Eliot's poetry forms a pattern whose stages consist of the quest for a hero, the quest of a hero, and the tracing out of the Way. The early poems thus constitute a quest for a hero capable of rescuing mankind from his own mortality. In doing so, they approach the problem from two viewpoints, the satiric and the elegiac. The former exposes the mock-heroes of the modern world; the latter laments mankind's apparent inability to produce the necessary hero-king. Beginning with *The Waste Land* the poetry turns to the quest of a hero, an action which involves a series of trials designed to prove whether or not the protagonist is a true hero. This quest achieves two things of great significance for mankind: first, the knowledge, and secondly, the wisdom of religious consciousness. The knowledge (found in *The Waste Land*) consists of a recognition of human mortality and divine immortality and of their interrelation. The wisdom (present in *The Hollow Men* and the Ariel poems) involves the realization that man's religious impulse, his conviction of a power greater than himself, is both essential to and ineradicable from him. Together these elements provide a necessary prelude to the Way which recapitulates in concentrated and individual form the whole history of religious consciousness.

While *The Rock* delineates the nature and history of mankind's religious struggle, the Ariel poems suggest what is needed for the attainment of the Way. In this connection it is significant that the latter show the protagonist as magus, saint, child, and wise old king. All are repositories of a particular dimension of wisdom which must be united in one man if the penitential agony of *Ash-Wednesday* is to be endured. Within the total context of Eliot's poetic thought, however, *Ash-Wednesday* constitutes not only a rite of penance for past sins, especially that of disbelief, but also a rite of initiation into a new mode of existence. Prior to this *The Waste Land* and the Ariel poems have presented different but related aspects of man's contact with religious consciousness. But to be aware, as is the old father-king in *Marina*, of the profound wisdom inhering in the fact of religious consciousness ("This form, this face, this life/Living to live in a world of time beyond me") is not the same thing as to possess and be possessed by a religion. Yet the man who has realized in himself the full significance of religious consciousness is intellectually and

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emotionally committed, if not compelled, to embrace a particular religion. It is this spiritual trial and initiation that is poetically realized in *Asb-Wednesday*.

Hitherto, the protagonist in all the poems has been a lone figure struggling with the torments of his own mind who comes in contact with the world only as it has impinged upon his consciousness. In *Asb-Wednesday*, however, he dramatically embodies the recognition that only through the medium of institutions is mankind able to cope with the world and to order it in accordance with the desires of his consciousness. And since it is the religious consciousness that has dominated Eliot's poetic thought up to this point, it follows that the Church is the first institution to be explored. *Asb-Wednesday*, then, focusses on the theme of religion just as *The Waste Land* concentrates on the theme of religious consciousness. The shift from the one to the other is adumbrated in the Ariel poems which stress the imminence of rebirth while still preserving the impression of living in the world of the dead god and his suffering worshippers. It is, however, only with *Asb-Wednesday* that the god in man begins to revive; the process is no longer simply an image, no longer merely an observed ritual performed apart from the individual man. Instead, the myth of the god who is revived and reborn becomes a deeply felt experience for the person who has relinquished the role of observer for that of participant. Thus the myth does not cease to be a story designed to enchant and intrigue but in addition becomes a ritual participation in the act of rebirth. Hence it is approached with reverence and awe.

Concomitant with this shift from the myth as story to the myth as experience is the modulation from the Quest into the Way. When we remember the convolutions of thought in *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*, *Portrait of a Lady*, and *Gerontion* and the kaleidoscopic scenes and dissolving perspectives of *The Waste Land*, the Quest stands revealed as an excursion through a psychological labyrinth whose natural background is composed of deserts, waste places, and urban jungles. By its very nature the Quest involves a wandering exploration of the world, a series of adventures which if not actually aimless, are incapable of being ordered, controlled, or predicted by the quester. He is subject to the world and its random succession of events, and to the extent that his perspective and point of view are dependent upon what happens to him, he is a passive figure who reacts rather than acts. In contradistinction to this the Way constitutes an ordered progression of experiences whose sequence and substance both are known to the participant. By actively choosing the Way the protagonist frees himself from his subjection to the world; indeed, as a result of his coherent, intelligible, and ordered point of view, he sees a different world from that of his fellows and is able to take an active part in it.

In effect the Way consists of three phases or aspects, namely, discipline, illumination, and union with the deity. *Asb-Wednesday* clearly represents the

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first of these three stages. According to Miss Dunbar's illuminating study of Dante and medieval thought this stage is marked by a turning toward "the infinite focus of creation," an aspect that is clearly marked in Eliot's poem by the turning image: "Because I do not hope to turn/ . . . Although I do not hope to turn." Another feature of this stage is that all the distractions which interfere with the soul's purification and ascent to the source of life are forgotten and so eradicated. The working out of this process in *Asb-Wednesday* is charted in the following lines:

And I pray that I may *forget*
These matters that with myself I too much discuss

* * *

And I who am here dissembled
Proffer my deeds to *oblivion*

* * *

As I am *forgotten*
And would be *forgotten*, so I would *forget*
Thus devoted, *concentrated in purpose*.

* * *

Rose of *forgetfulness*
Exhausted and life-giving

* * *

Distraction, music of the flute, stops and steps of the
mind over the third stair,
Fading, fading. (italics mine)

In addition this purgative phase stresses physical and intellectual discipline so that the individual, as Miss Dunbar remarks, may remain "sensitive, even in crises, to each faintest sign which would indicate the way." Traces of this attitude can be found in *Asb-Wednesday* through such lines as "Teach us to care and not to care/Teach us to sit still" and through such images as that of the man's calmly recounting how three white leopards devoured his body. It is significant too that after the bones accept the discipline of the body's destruction—"We are glad to be scattered, we did little good to each other"—the protagonist finds "strength beyond hope and despair/Climbing the third stair."

Though *Murder in the Cathedral* too is concerned with purgation and initiation, its dramatic form is in sharp contrast to that of *Asb-Wednesday*. In the poem a personal state of mind is rendered impersonal by a technique which begins several interrelated trains of thought and then leaves the reader to follow them out for himself. The agony of purgation and the humility of initiation are rendered as a series of static experiences divorced from any clearly realized scene or background. The emphasis is upon the act of "turn-

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ing" rather than upon the scene or situation which conditions the act. In the play the protagonist's spiritual trials, temptations, and ultimate acceptance are linked to a particular historical situation, one of the "timeless moments" imaginatively realized. The play, however, parallels the Lenten poem in that the protagonist must accept purgation before he can be initiated into his new life. In *Asb-Wednesday* he is purged of his conviction that the absence of hope entails damnation and subsequently is initiated into the institution of religion, that is, into the possibility of blessedness. *Murder in the Cathedral*, on the other hand, links its two rites more closely. Thomas Becket, the Archbishop, finds that his supreme temptation is his desire to become a saint by being martyred. At the same time he is faced with a rite of initiation by which his office as Archbishop is transcended in his new role as Saint Thomas à Becket. Thus the fourth and final Tempter insinuates his way into Thomas' consciousness by his suggestion to "Seek the way of martyrdom, make yourself the lowest/On earth, to be high in heaven." This leads the Archbishop to question the very existence of the Way itself and to face the evil and weakness inherent in his own nature: "Is there no way, in my soul's sickness,/ Does not lead to damnation in pride?" As a result of this confrontation, he recognizes the essence of temptation and performs the mental rite which will initiate him into martyrdom:

The last temptation is the greatest treason:
To do the right deed for the wrong reason.

* * *

I shall no longer act or suffer, to the sword's end.
Now my good Angel, whom God appoints
To be my guardian, hover over the swords' points.

Purgation constitutes a process of sloughing off what is impure in one. It follows that what remains is not only the pure remnant but also a new thing in that it is now revealed in its true nature for the first time. Thus in *Asb-Wednesday* the protagonist is divested of his sin and guilt, while at the same time he is initiated into a state of belief and grace which despite a fallen world can focus on the deity: "Our peace in His Will." On a communal level this initiation represents an initiation into the Church, the basically abstract yet visible form of the deity. Like all institutions, it possesses a tradition and a history. Having passed from a concern with religious consciousness to a concentration on religion, the protagonist then logically proceeds to an absorption in the tradition and history of the religious institution.

THIS concern leads directly into the *Four Quartets* whose central theme is history just as that of *Asb-Wednesday* is religion. The protagonist finds that man's evolving present cannot be comprehended apart from his evolving

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past; indeed, religion and history are seen to be inseparable. Hence, "a people without history/Is not redeemed from time, for history is a pattern/Of timeless moments." In a sense, this poetic version of the twin necessities of mankind, a religion and a history, was anticipated, though not in any systematic or exhaustive fashion, by a series of prose comments. Thus one can detect the bare bones and lineaments of the *Four Quartets* in the poet's brief essays on Dante, Baudelaire, Lancelot Andrewes, John Bramhall, Pascal, and Irving Babbitt. The poem, on one level at least, grows out of the Church's history, its tradition, and its past. "Thoughts after Lambeth," "Catholicism and International Order," *After Strange Gods, The Idea of a Christian Society*, and *Notes Toward the Definition of Culture*—each, in its own way, is a prose adumbration of certain controlling concepts which appear in the *Four Quartets*.

Just as *Ash-Wednesday* and the *Four Quartets* develop different themes so they constitute distinct stages of the Way. *Ash-Wednesday*, as we have seen, represents the first stage of the Way, that of inversion, the "turning" image, and the purgative aspect. The *Four Quartets*, on the other hand, mark the second stage of man's religious pilgrimage. The character of this aspect of the journey is suggested by Miss Dunbar: "the constant tendency in man's nature to worship the symbol rather than the thing symbolized is simply evidence of insufficient discipline in the mystic Way, but at the same time right use of symbol is man's only means of progress in that way, until at last his vision be bathed in the river of light. This aspect of the mystic way has been termed the illuminative way." The poet's concern with linguistic expression, with the poetic communication of his vision, and his realization that this can be achieved only through symbols are all reflected in the *Four Quartets*.

Thus the protagonist observes that "Words, after speech, reach/Into the silence. Only by the form, the pattern,/Can words or music reach/The stillness." Always one's attempts to communicate fall short, "Leaving one still with the intolerable wrestle/With words and meanings." "The protagonist finds that "every attempt/Is a wholly new start, and a different kind of failure/Because one has only learnt to get the better of words/For the thing one no longer has to say, or the way in which/One is no longer disposed to say it." Out of these failures is born the humility of endeavor: "For us, there is only the trying. The rest is not our business." By grounding his efforts at communication in humility, the protagonist at length attains the "right use of symbol":

Whatever we inherit from the fortunate
We have taken from the defeated
What they had to leave us — a symbol:
A symbol perfected in death.

This poetic expression of the second stage of the Way serves to illuminate

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both Eliot's past writing and his view of history and tradition. Thus it is significant that the discovery of the "symbol perfected in death" follows an exploration of the most crucial period in the history of Anglican Christianity, namely, the English Civil War and the rise of Puritanism.

In focussing on the multiple levels of this crisis and its historical resolution through the agency of time by which "all are folded in a single party," the *Four Quartets* herald the imminence of the god's and the hero's resurrection and return to the height of his powers. They proclaim:

And all shall be well and
All manner of things shall be well
When the tongues of flame are in-folded
Into the crowned knot of fire
And the fire and the rose are one.

The rose, which according to *The Hollow Men* is "the hope only/Of empty men," represents the departed god's promise to return. As a symbol, it is essentially passive, contemplative, and designed to inculcate patience derived from spiritual discipline. On the other hand, "the tongues of flame," which since *The Waste Land* have been purgatorial in character, are now to be merged "into the crowned knot of fire." The "crowned knot" suggests the rising god viewed under the image of a burning brand. As a symbol, it has an active function, for it presents the conquering of enemies, the winning over of adherents, and the coronation of the sacred king.

Both in the drama and in the poetry the purgative stage emphasizes a particular experience or complex of experiences and the protagonist's endeavor to assimilate these in terms of his own sensibility. When we come to the illuminative stage (the *Four Quartets* and *The Family Reunion*), however, attention is focussed instead upon the reaction of other persons to the protagonist, who has been transformed by his experiences. Coupled with this is the protagonist's attempt to communicate precisely what it is that he has experienced. Thus in *The Family Reunion*, following Harry's partial but startling revelation of his changed nature, his relatives react with characteristic puttering futility and advice prompted by egocentricity. Horsens for the hunt, a recently discovered wine merchant, a new gardener and cook are their answers to Harry's awareness of evil and guilt. In the face of this Harry can but suggest the impossibility of direct communication:

But how can I explain, how can I explain to you?
You will understand less after I have explained it.
All that I could hope to make you understand
Is only events: not what has happened.
And people to whom nothing has ever happened
Cannot understand the unimportance of events.

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Harry too discovers "a symbol perfected in death." Having been disciplined through the terror inspired by the Eumenides, he at length realizes that he is on the level of illumination where he finds "a communication, a scent/Direct to the brain." Through it he gains that measure of insight on which he can found the remainder of his life:

And now I know

That my business is not to run away, but to pursue,

Not to avoid being found, but to seek.

I would not have chosen this way, had there been any other!

It is at once the hardest thing, and the only thing possible.

Now they will lead me. I shall be safe with them;

I am not safe here.

THE FAMILY REUNION ends, however, not with union but with departure and separation. Though Harry is impelled by "love and terror/Of what waits and wants me," his way is toward "the worship in the desert, the thirst and deprivation,/A stony sanctuary and a primitive altar." Before he can return to the world of men ("Until I come again"), he must withdraw from it into ascetic expiation and contemplation. Yet as Miss Dunbar suggests, "highest is the contemplative life which bears fruit in action." The protagonist desirous of attaining his ultimate goal, that of union with the divine power, must return from contemplation amid monasticism to the world of society where others can be aided and shown the Way. With this the protagonist enters the third, the unitive stage of the Way; it is that of progress which consists in obedience to the law of ascent through creatures. Or, to use Miss Dunbar's words, "as with his progress he perceives more and more of ultimate reality through the symbol, at the same time the symbol occupies less and less of his attention, until ultimately it takes its place among all created things."

It is this stage that is finally reached in *The Cocktail Party* and, more recently, *The Confidential Clerk*, both of which constitute a return from the monasticism and asceticism of *The Family Reunion* and *Murder in the Cathedral*. They mark the appearance of the healing god who constitutes the end of the Way. By facing up to the truths with which Sir Henry Harcourt-Reilly confronts them, the characters in *The Cocktail Party* achieve not so much their own cure as the knowledge of how to live with the disease inherent in the human condition. As a psychoanalyst and doctor, Harcourt-Reilly is linked to the primitive healer, the medicine-man; he is a kind of priest of the imagination. What he assists them to see, in effect, is that the capacity for spiritual and social revivification exists in each individual and is realized through the way in which the individual reacts to natural events, human beings,

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and psychological situations. As a result of what has been learned in *The Cocktail Party*, the characters in *The Confidential Clerk* are in less need of a guide. They have thoroughly assimilated the deity and so, in a sense, become their own audience. They possess quite literally a community spirit in consequence of which their efforts to understand the protagonist and his experience constitute a co-operative venture. Each contributes what insight he has for the general illumination of the basic human situation; hence there are a number of partial guides but none of Harcourt-Reilly's stature.

Since the two plays represent the unitive way, which, according to Miss Dunbar, consists "essentially of glimpses of things as a whole," it is inevitable that the characters' vision should be limited rather than total. For at the core of both plays is the theme of the acceptance of one's limitations. This, as Colby Simpkins of *The Confidential Clerk* makes clear, is the illumination achieved through purgation: "Now that I've abandoned *my* illusions and ambitions/All that is left is love." It follows naturally that the supreme symbol of the unitive way should be the union of marriage. Hence it is significant to find *The Cocktail Party* and *The Confidential Clerk* developing the timeless implications of contemporary marital relations. Both plays seek to restore to human marriage the subtle and inclusive levels of union embodied in the sacred marriage. This recognition on a personal and individual level of the meaning of love and union is matched on an impersonal and general level by a discovery of the nature of time and life. Thus Edward Chamberlayne is finally able to say:

Oh, it isn't much

That I understand yet! But Sir Henry has been saying,

I think, that every moment is a fresh beginning;

And Julia, that life is only keeping on;

And somehow, the two ideas seem to fit together.

Union with the goal of the Way fails, however, if it does not express itself in the daily attitudes and social modes of the individual. It is in this last sense that life consists of a "keeping on," of a maintenance of one's natural manners and habits. Though the Chamberlaynes must accept the consequence of their choice and be ready for the cocktail party, "it is also right/That the Chamberlaynes should now be giving a party."

In this we see the completion of the pattern and the final transformation of both the protagonist and his world. At the outset society was viewed as an unhappy mixture of the effete and the vulgar, of the desiccated impeccability of Cousin Harriet, Aunt Helen, and Mrs. Phlaccus and the boisterous animality of Mr. Apollinax and Sweeney. The ultimate images of the debased character of both social extremes are those of Princess Volupine and Bleistein. In such a world revitalization appears impossible, for the only ones who recognize its spiritual, cultural, and social impoverishment are either incapable or

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afraid of altering it. The underlying theme, however, is that of the necessity not of escaping this dilemma but of solving it and thereby restoring the human community to its true form. Hence the first phase of Eliot's work focusses upon the quest for a contemporary individual of sufficiently heroic stature to reshape the manners and morals of his society. This quest, however, proves a failure, but a necessary failure. Only when the mock protagonists are exposed does the real character of the protagonist and the essential nature of his task appear. Thus in *The Waste Land* he is seen to be the universal embodiment of mankind whose central goal is the complete development of the religious consciousness inherent in every individual.

Only through man's recognition that he lives in a religious society can the group be transformed into a living community. This recognition is slowly borne in upon the protagonist as he witnesses and experiences the various scenes of *The Waste Land*, for they comprise his wandering quest for knowledge concerning the religious consciousness. Here he sees for the first time that man's mortality is balanced by divine immortality. In effect, he comes to realize that death is a rite of transition as well as a *terminus ad quem*. With the perception of the ritual character of death, the protagonist enters that phase of his journey in which the Quest is replaced by the Way. He now understands that man's problem is not that of discovering the divine source and end of life—it is as well known as it is perennial—but of learning the proper mode by which to approach the ground of existence. From *Asb-Wednesday* to *The Confidential Clerk* it is precisely this educative process that the protagonist has been concerned with. Through its threefold emphasis on renunciation, illumination, and union, the protagonist finds that his attitudes towards himself, his fellow men, and his deity are ordered by a grace that is both spiritual and social. Having acquired or regained the necessary psychological, linguistic, and religious modes, the protagonist then employs them actively in life. Thus by indirection, compassion, and co-operation the original task of reviving society is fulfilled. Prufrock's nagging despair at his own inadequacies has been replaced by Colby Simpkins' calm acceptance of his personal limitations. Similarly, the egocentric snobbery and pretensions of the social gatherings in *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*, *Portrait of a Lady*, and *Mr. Apollinax* are replaced by the compassionate groups found in *The Cocktail Party* and *The Confidential Clerk*.

The Two Views of Poetry: An Essay in Reconciliation

BY JOHN JULIAN RYAN

TAKEN in its broadest sense, the most important art in the history of mankind has always been, and potentially still is, the art of poetry. With its aid, we can be disposed to lead lives that are heroic and sacramental; and without that aid, we tend to lead the lives of scientific and pietistic barbarians. Yet this art is one of which it is almost impossible to give students today a full and due appreciation, for anyone who attempts this task finds himself confronted, principally, with two opposing views (or shades or combinations of these) that are very hard to change. The first, which can perhaps be characterized as the best low-brow view, may be stated briefly as follows:

Only that poetry is any good which is a form of versified prose or oratory. Just as the greatest value of a joke lies in its usefulness as a pleasing introduction to a serious speech, so the greatest value of a poem lies in its usefulness as a peroration that gives the speech a good moral life.

There is, of course, another kind of poetry—the kind that is reserved for a few strange and precious individuals who, like the poets that dash the stuff off, are supersensitive, idealistic, unworldly and sissified. This type of poetry is, naturally, of very little consequence; it has not enough meaning to make ordinary, normal, hard-headed people bother with it.

But if this view, which is, of course, that of a large majority of students (as also, alas, of many of their parents and teachers) offers a grave obstacle to the teaching of poetry, so too does that which is in direct reaction to it, and which may be summarized fairly enough, I think, as follows:

Poetry is never to be turned to in a spirit of illiberal utilitarianism. Nor is anything else, for that matter. There is no more despicable (as well as unfruitful) an attitude than that of a person who approaches everything calculatively, aiming only to exploit it. For such a person, things mean, and are to be respected for, only what he can get out of them for his personal advantage. A flower or a picture is, to him, useful only for the touch of color it gives to a room; a game, only for the score (on which he can bet—and win); a poem, only for its quotable adage.

And since to make any art subservient in this way is to degrade it unspeakably, the only right approach to a poem is as to a thing-in-itself, something with no end beyond its own intrinsic perfection—or, at most, the affording of an experience of aesthetic delight which is an end-in-itself. The soundest, because the most liberal, view of poetry is that strictly, it is useless. Certainly, whatever else it is, it is not a mere device for teaching truth.

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In this denial of any didactic function for poetry we are confirmed, not only by the fact that the verse which the philistine cherishes in his wallet is unworthy of the name of poetry, but also by the fact that great poetry does not need to be truly scientific. Milton's preference for the Ptolemaic system did not destroy the essential quality of his epics; nor can we say that the greatest poetry of our time gives much hint of the enormous advances that have taken place in the world of learning since Milton's day.

Moreover, if poetry is not the expression of scientific fact, neither is it the expression of moral truth. A poem is a source of aesthetic delight; and aesthetic delight is an experience of disinterested wonder. To reduce it therefore to the level of a preachment—to make it the source of an experience that is not disinterested—is to treat it literally as if it were not a poem at all. There is, then, no one more dangerous to this liberal art than the moralistic teacher who approaches a poem as if it were something to be analyzed first and last for its moral.

Properly, indeed, a poem is a work of art that affords us, as far as this is possible, the delight of the intuition of pure form—its own form. Naturally, to have a form with the *splendor ordinis*, it must, as perforce a referential art, be made up of words with meanings and therefore partake of some of the beauty of the realities to which the words refer—or of the impressions made by these realities. But the primary function of words in poetry considered as poetry is to afford a unitary matter that makes possible a blend or compound (never a mixture)—a symbolic but self-subsistent entity that is to be appreciated in and for itself only. As Hopkins has said, it is the beauty of its form (in-poem) that we savor when we taste a poem as a poem: "Some matter and meaning," he writes, "is essential to it but only as an element necessary to support and employ the shape which is contemplated for its own sake."

Here we have, I believe, a fair statement of the position maintained by many, if not by most, of the teachers in our college English departments today. And, negatively, it is, of course, a very strong position. Positively, however, it seems to me very weak since it is one of the alternatives of a fallacy of false alternatives. Thus, to say that a philistine is wrong is not to say that an aesthete is right. To say that poetry does not express scientific truth is not to say that it may not express something more valuable—supra-scientific truth. To say that a poem is not to be approached for its subject-matter pure and simple is not to say that it is to be approached for its form pure and simple. And to say that it is not to be approached analytically is not to say that it is not to be savored thoroughly in an after-analysis.

THAT poetry may have a certain truth-value becomes evident when we examine closely each of the special forms into which it is commonly divided: dramatic, epic, lyric. We find, for example, in any Greek tragedy of importance a manifestation, not only of some religious truth about *hybris*, but also many insights into the psychology of the characters and into the laws gov-

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erning their social and political action, as expressed particularly in the gnomic statements that interpret the various situations of the play. So, too, for Homer's epics: these afford us a treasury of examples, not only of *pietas* in its broadest sense, but also of artful management and leadership—in short, of ancient chivalry. They show clearly how men do act, as well as how they should act, in trying crises, affording us thereby a whole case-book of vicarious experiences.

And the effect of historical drama or epic in determining or clarifying our vision is so obvious as to need little discussion here. Who does not know Roman or Elizabethan history better for Shakespeare, "unfactual" as his view of it finally is? Who does not know chivalry better for *The Song of Roland*; or the court of love better for the works of Chaucer? Or the men and culture of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, for Dante? Or those of today, for T. S. Eliot?

Moreover, it can be maintained, I think, that even such lyric poetry as is not frankly didactic (like the "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" or the Ode on the "Intimations of Immortality") is inevitably instructive in three ways. For one thing, just as a scientist needs a good, exact name for the realities with which he is concerned, so as to grasp and think about them dispassionately and effectively, so do we need richly right terms for grasping synthetically or comprehensively, and with the soundest emotional disposition, the molecular realities with which we are concerned. Here too, the better the term, the sounder our reaction to, and ability to deal justly with, the reality to which it refers. And it is just this kind of "better" term that the poet gives us—a proof of which service lies in the fact that a Shakespearean play often sounds, nowadays, like a string of quotations, so frequently have we had recourse to it for the terminology we require for sane and normal living.

Again, poetry is inevitably instructive inasmuch as *translation* of one order of being into terms of another, when properly done, is a direct source of enlightenment. In other words, the poetic genius who enables us to see and *appreciate* the reality of one thing (a young child of nature, for example) in terms of another (a violet by a mossy stone) is doing much the same sort of thing for human understanding as does the scientific genius who enables us to see and *measure* one reality (heat) in terms of another (the "degrees" indicated by the expansion of a column of mercury). Indeed, if Aristotle is right, the characteristic mark of genius is the ability to detect the ordinarily unnoted, but highly illuminative, analogies existing between different beings or orders of being. If this is true of those who give us our insights into aspectual entities, second substances, it is no less true of those who give us our insights into entities viewed as whole existents, first substances. God, says St. Thomas, can make one thing mean another. The poet enables us to see and realize such meanings.

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Finally, the poet has a keen sense of the preciousness of everything, every actuality, in its own right—a sense sharpened by his poignant awareness of the transience of all beings. He is almost painfully sensitive to what an accountant would call the replacement value of a thing—although, for the poet, it is more the value of a thing as irreplaceable. If the scientist, in affording us a clear and certain understanding of general similarities of things, sometimes dulls our sense of the uniqueness and individual preciousness of these same things, the poet rights the balance for us here: he helps us to appreciate things as sub-personalities. Even the simplest of lyric poetry, then, can be instructive in the sense of enabling us to see and appreciate things more truly than we might do otherwise.

Moreover, to maintain that poetry has no didactic value morally and spiritually is to raise a swarm of questions. If this is so, one may ask, why has mankind turned to poetry all down the ages—why, in fact, is it again turning to poetry now—for such instruction? That it was the main source of Greek education, for instance, especially of Greek moral education, has been made abundantly clear by Marrou in his classic work, *The Education of Antiquity*, where, in a section entitled, "Homer, the Educator of Greece," he says flatly: "As Plato said, Homer was, in the full sense of the word, the educator of Greece. . . . He was this from the very beginning . . . And the educator of Greece he remained . . . There are many testimonies to the fact that every cultivated Greek had a copy of Homer's works at his bedside . . . We must in fact reject any purely aesthetic explanation of the long favour he enjoyed . . . It was not primarily as a literary masterpiece that the epic was studied, but because its content was ethical, a treatise on the ideal . . ." Of this tendency to turn to poets for ethical and religious truth, Butcher has this to say: "How deeply the Greek mind was impressed with the moral office of the poet, is shown by the attitude which even Aristophanes feels constrained to take up in relation to his art. He proclaims that the comic poet not only ministers to the enjoyment of the community and educates their taste, he is also a moral teacher and political adviser . . . He puts into the mouth of Aeschylus, his ideal tragedian, the saying that the poet is the instructor of grown men as the teacher is of youth; and even the comic stage is, according to the theory if not the practice of Aristophanes, the school of the mature citizen."

Centuries later these ideas were to be echoed, almost exactly, by such writers as Ben Jonson (in his preface to *Volpone*) and, later still, Dr. Samuel Johnson, with his statement: "It was said of Euripides that every verse was a precept; and it may be said of Shakespeare, that from his works may be collected a system of civil and economical prudence."

In fact, if we pass over all these, and come down, for a crucial instance, to Hopkins, who is perhaps one mainstay of the amoralists, we find that even he

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is not out of line with this kind of thinking. Writing to Coventry Patmore concerning Patmore's book, *The Angel in the House*, he says: "... to dip into it was like opening a basket of violets. To have criticized it looks now like meddling with the altar-vessels; yet they too are burnished with wash-leather. . . . A good book is to educate the world at large. *The Angel in the House* is in the highest degree instructive, it is a book of morals and in a field not before treated and yet loudly calling to be treated. It cannot indeed ever be popular as a classic, read by many, recognized by all. And I am not satisfied because it is not recognized"

Today, moreover, men are beginning to see the inevitability of having recourse to poetry because they are coming to recognize the limitations of scientific truth alone—and even of what is commonly called philosophic truth. More and more often, of late, they have come to see (what in prescientific cultures is simply taken for granted) that the normal terms to be used in arriving at, as well as the normal idiom for expressing, the deepest truths is that of symbolism. Animating the resurgent interest in everything from semantics to archetypal analysis is the strong realization that the symbolic mode of thought and expression is not only astonishingly fruitful, but also humanly indispensable. As Cecily Hastings and Donal Nicoll, in their anthology of contemporary thought, *Selection II*, have pointed out: "deprived of symbols, thrown back from the real world into a world where the limits of his experience are set by his own powers of measurement and conscious analysis, man dries up and disintegrates. He becomes seemingly unable to ask the fundamental questions; the questions to which answers can only be given in symbols. He ceases to be sufficiently interested in the whole meaning of the world to believe that such a meaning exists and can be uttered to him as myth." As a consequence, they point out, we have "a people left starving for a myth devoid of the fictitious, an utterance of the Word, a 'pure myth.'"

To what scientists, indeed, can we turn today for answers to such questions as: What is the meaning of life? What is it all about? How can we best use our discoveries for contemplation and for charitably fostering the growth of the kingdom of God on earth? How may we best do away with usury and enable all men to lead profound lives of Christian poverty? How is man inspired or perverted by the romance of reality? What do we mean by the mystery of the human heart, and how does it show itself most typically in men's lives? What can we do as peoples in expiation for all the wrongs that we have as peoples committed? How can we best, here and now, live up to, develop, make avail, our heritage of chivalry, courtesy, love of freedom, sanctity?

If it be objected that these are matters for the theologian, the question still arises: whence, *basically*, will the theologian derive his answers if not from the most profound poetry (as St. Thomas, in the *Summa*—I-I, Arts. IX and

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X—recognizes it to be) of the Bible, as well as from the "real" poetry of the liturgy?

IN the light of these considerations, the position of those who hold that poetry is simply an amoral source of aesthetic delight seems to lead to several somewhat strange conclusions.

First of all, it would seem to imply that there is something absurdly anomalous in our general evaluation of the great poets. For these men, it would seem, are great poets only by accident; and therefore, in truth, they are not great poets at all. If we are to take them at their own word, and at the word of their contemporaries, they were clearly trying to fulfill an intention that is threefold: that of conveying to their readers some vital and needed truth; that of giving them a wise disposition of mind and heart; and that of doing both these things so entertainingly—through so engrossing or enrapturing an aesthetic experience—as not to seem to be doing them at all. Yet though this was their intention, and though they fulfilled it admirably, they must, according to the theory of pure aesthetics, be considered great rather because they fulfilled another of which they were unaware: the much higher one of affording to readers of all times (even to those readers of our own day who no longer go to them for truth of any kind) a rarefied, intuitive vision of the beauty of pure form.

Carried to its logical conclusion, this theory ends in what has been called (by Julien Benda in *Belphégor*) the fallacy of "musicalisation." This fallacy runs as follows: All the arts afford the aesthetic experience. But music affords this experience in its purest form. Therefore, a painting, a statue, or a poem is good insofar as its effect approximates that of music—especially that of pure or absolute music.

The mistake here lies in the assumption that there is such a thing as *the* aesthetic experience. The fact is that one art produces one kind of aesthetic experience; another art produces another kind. Literature, for instance, having symbols that are primarily referential, does one thing to us; music, having symbols that are not primarily referential, does another. And the experience produced by the one art is never to be set up as the norm for that produced by another. It is simply folly to assume that we can arrive at the fullest and most exact appreciation of a poem by looking for the same kind of beauty in it that we find in a piece of music: as if we could never come to a true appreciation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* until we recognized in it the same qualities as we find in Mendelssohn's *Overture*.

Moreover, the position of the amoralists raises two profound questions: the one, philosophic; the other, ethical. For, granted that a poem with an obvious moral may be far less poetic than one without a moral, it does not follow

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either that the more moral a poem is, the less beautiful it is, or that the less moral it is, the more beautiful it is. Maintaining these two consequences amounts to denying the generally accepted Scholastic doctrine of the transposability of the transcendentals: it amounts to affirming that a thing can be beautiful without being true or good. Perhaps so; but until the amorologists can adduce sufficient philosophic evidence for such a conclusion, we may be pardoned for assuming that the burden of the proof lies on them. And, as yet, they seem to have done very little to shift that burden to the shoulders of their opponents.

Their attitude here is, to be sure, quite understandable and, so far as any negative reaction can be, it is right. Duty, as duty, is unquestionably dull. "Stern daughter of the voice of God" she may be; but simply *as* stern, she is, alas, not much fun. And when the profound sacramental warmth and splendor of the Mysteries of the Good News have been congealed into a set of puritanical police-regulations and these then presented as the loveliest truths man is privileged to contemplate, naturally any normal mind rebels. But, of course, agnostics and legalistic catechists to the contrary notwithstanding, the truths of Revelation are no such set of regulations: they are truths of an order that calls for the supernal eloquence of the Prophets, of David, of Our Lord, of St. John, and all the rest.

Then, too, as the Roman use of the word *decus* indicates, and as St. Thomas points out (in his article on whether goodness is the same thing as the spiritually beautiful), just as physical beauty consists in having good proportions and a radiant complexion, so spiritual beauty consists in conduct that is well-proportioned and bright with the spiritual clarity of reason. "And therefore," he concludes, "goodness (*bonestum*) is the same as spiritual beauty (*spirituali decori*)."

The ethical problem raised by the amorologist position comes down to this: St. Augustine says that sin consists in using what should be enjoyed and enjoying what should be used. Are we, then, to suppose that Hopkins, a priest (who was of Augustinian bent) could have wished to encourage us (as in *The Windhover*) to use a central doctrine of Christianity (like the Incarnation) to enjoy the delight of a conceptual-imagistic-dictional-musical form, a poetic "inscape," for its own sake alone? That he should be willing to use God's truth to enable us to enjoy a human artifact somehow seems a little hard to take.

ALL these objections do not mean, however, that less attention should be paid to the qualities of inscape, the integral form of poetry, or to the aesthetics of poetry generally. On the contrary, one could wish that even our amorologists gave a great deal more study to this subject than they do. One cannot help wishing that they, as well as others, saw more clearly such facts as: That only obfus-

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cation can result from our continuing to scan an accentual form of verse as if it were a quantitative form (using, ridiculously enough, the symbols for long and short syllables when we are marking, not quantities, but light and heavy accents). That the *accent oratoire*, as well as the *accent tonique*, applies, not to French alone, but to all languages. That of the two accents, the *oratoire* is primary. That, as a consequence, we have three degrees of stress in English, not two. That it is schematic cadencing, *not* the metric foot, which is the primary musical *differentia* of verse. That such cadencing, when used with occult symmetry, is the main determinant of stanzaic patterning. That a poem, being dialogue in the broadest sense of the word, should accord with the norms of good dialogue. That the analogy of feeling-tone, used in accordance with the principles of complementary and contrasting harmony, largely determines the "staging" of a lyric and the "feel" of its imagery and word-music. That the kinesthesia of enunciation affords what is perhaps the subtlest enhancement of poetic diction (as the work of Hopkins clearly shows). And that all the elements of a poem and the poem as a whole can profitably be studied for their qualities of unity, variety, vividness and appropriateness: the irreducible aesthetic qualities of any work of art.

We are not to suppose, in other words, that those who have been mainly interested in the truth and goodness of the matter of a poem cannot also be made aware of the beauty of its form; or that those who have been mainly interested in the beauty of its form are the only persons capable of making worthwhile contributions to the aesthetics of poetry. There is no reason, in fact, for supposing that poetry must be handed over either to the didacticists, on one hand, or to the aesthetes, on the other.

HOW, then, can poetry be treated so as to conserve the values cherished by both groups, as well as the values which transcend and as it were subsume these? The answer lies, I believe, in our distinguishing the two attitudes with which we may turn to a poem and the two methods of appreciation which are implied by these attitudes, and in ordering these rightly to one another.

First, then, it is necessary that we take account of the fact that there is a difference between simply reading (or, better, listening to) a poem and studying it. In doing the first, we are simply subjecting ourselves to it unreservedly, letting it make its impression upon us pleasurably—without any preconceived notions about what we are to get out of it, and without exercising any very special effort to grasp it. This process is one in which we become as a little child who is about to enjoy a Walt Disney picture. All we have to do here is set ourselves as effortlessly for the idiom of poetry as the child does for the idiom of the animated cartoon (with all its two-dimensional and chromatic artificialities and with its clear requirement for "poetic faith"). The one thing,

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of course, which we must never do—or allow our students to do—is approach a poem for the first time in an analytic frame of mind.

But studying a poem is something else again. As the letter of Hopkins quoted above beautifully indicates, once we have attained all the enjoyment that we can get from a poem by taking it in unanalytically, there is no reason why we should not rehearse or savor its wonders—as who does not?—retrospectively. We may re-enjoy it by after-analysis. (Actually, this term is redundant: *all* analysis should be after-analysis). In this way we may gain that sort of extra pleasure from a poem which we gain from a ball game or show, through talking it over as we leave the park or the theatre. And in this kind of savoring there is every reason for exploring a poem for all its implications and qualities (religious, philosophic, psychological, aesthetic, technical, historical, biographical, morphological).

The fear that such an after-analysis may cause us to approach the next poem analytically is likely to be as groundless as the fear that a similar after-analysis of games and plays will cause us to approach them also analytically. The much greater likelihood is that when we turn to a new poem, or even return to an old one, we shall find that we can shut off the X-ray machine very easily—indeed, that the poem will shut it off for us itself by bewitching us, as do all works of genius. And when we do go back to a poem to re-read it freshly after the after-analysis (as we should) we shall find that our response has simply become deeper and richer.

Whether, however, a student should be encouraged to study fully only a few major poems and then to let the "set" of mind he has thus acquired aid him to appreciate the rest of the poems he reads, without systematic after-analysis of them—this is something for the individual teacher to decide, especially in reference to his particular students. Obviously, every student should be given no less training than he needs for coming to a sensitive appreciation of it, and no more than he can stand without becoming too analytic or precious or "academic."

Certainly, whatever else he is given, he should be given enough training to enable him to realize the full splendor of poetic truth and the indispensability, for the Christian, of the poetic view of reality.

And whatever method the teacher of literature may use, one thing will be vital here: that he keep himself fully aware, as the trustee of poetry, of the central importance of this art to all civilization. On him rests the duty of seeing that poetry is not lost to those who need it most, that it does not become the private treasure of neo-epicureans, and that it works its full effect in providing and inspiring us with that wisdom and that vision without which the people, even the well-fed people, perish.

The Church, Society, and Paul Bourget

BY RUDOLPH J. MONDELLI

AT the turn of the twentieth century, Paul Bourget prefaced the first volume of his *Œuvres complètes* with an article in which he insists that his adherence to the principles of the Catholic Church represents the end of a gradual development in his thinking. He had practiced a methodical doubt in his observation of reality, which brought him to the belief that Christianity was the only force that could cure man of his ills. In a letter to Victor Giraud, dated November 30, 1899, he explains the philosophy underlying his development and his desire that his work be regarded as an "apologétique expérimentale," in essence a method consisting of the complete adherence "au fait," before drawing a conclusion or championing any doctrine. In other words, Bourget maintains that, whatever sociological conclusions he has drawn, they are due entirely to his observations of life, that passion, prejudice, and preconceived notions as to the remedies for society's ills and the source of its vigor and health play no part in his program.

Society's need of Christianity, as the only and necessary condition for cure and health, Bourget found verified in the work of Frédéric Le Play, economist and sociologist whose *La réforme sociale en France* and *L'organisation du travail* he had studied carefully. Through observation of societies, Le Play had come to the conclusion that the moral and material well-being of man depends on the strength of his religious faith. Religion, he believed, is alone capable of guaranteeing the social order. In addition to Le Play, Balzac and Taine confirmed Bourget's conviction of the role of religion in society. To be a psychologist is not enough for him because once he has discovered the moral laws of life, he feels that they should be interpreted and employed as cures for the troubles of mankind. Bourget's point of view thus becomes social; he is interested in the good he can do for his fellow men. The Catholic Church now is not only his spiritual guide but the buttress of his social opinions.

Bourget likewise became settled in his political doctrine. In 1900 he wrote to Charles Maurras, future author of *L'enquête sur la monarchie* (1900-1909), praising the doctrine of construction and reparation in the treatises of De Bonald, the studies of Balzac, the monographs of Le Play, and Taine's *Origines de la France contemporaine*. De Bonald and Le Play placed their emphasis upon the family as a social cell, for whose moral and material well-being society should strive. Le Play and Taine attempted to uproot what they termed

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the false dogmas of the French Revolution: systematic liberty, the idea of providential equality, and the right of revolt. Bourget criticized democracy because he felt that it was not in keeping with the laws of science which he had observed: a monarchical form of government seemed best to him.

As a result of the evolution in his thought, Bourget veered to the social novel and began a whole series of what he termed "romans à idées," beginning with *L'étape* and continuing with *Un divorce* and *L'émigré*. For the good of humanity he devotes himself in these works first to the defense of the family, which entails, in his opinion, stable family life, indissoluble marriage, and the transmission of trade or profession from father to son; second, to the support of a strong religion; and third, to an appeal to tradition, meaning a monarchical or aristocratic state with an hereditary nobility recruited from all classes and with the decentralization which would restore to the provinces their individualized local life.

Bourget considered the main qualities of a good novel to be credibility, "présence," importance of the subject, and "actualité." This last term is of particular importance, because the novelist meant by it the effect of the novel on the reader. He advocated the retention of some of the methods of realism, particularly careful observation and documentation, and considered the crisis as a very important element of the novel, comparing it to the crisis in a disease. Bourget made a distinction between "littérature à idées" and "littérature à thèses." He believed that a novel could suggest or present an hypothesis, but should not presume to demonstrate or prove. He saw that the novelist could not be objective, but claimed that, while being the editor or organizer of data, he was not to try being a demonstrator. A disciple of Balzac, he was convinced that he wrote "romans à idées." Like Balzac, also, he looked upon his novels, taken all together, as a unified whole, his early novels constituting documentation and statement of the problem, and his later works indicating the causes and underlying laws involved. With this view in mind he believed that he had the right to draw conclusions based on the facts presented in his novels.

THE religious and social concepts of Paul Bourget find clear expression in *L'étape* (1902). Speaking of this novel, Ernest Seillière, in *Paul Bourget, psychologue et sociologue*, says: "It seems to me that *L'étape* marks the real turning in Bourget's thought. Here he abandons his almost single concern with emotional mysticism; he now busies himself for a time with social mysticism as the theme of his works of imagination." In *L'étape* Bourget appears an outright Catholic and monarchist: in a word, a traditionalist. Henceforth his creed is that of one religion, Catholicism, and one government, monarchy, without which there can be no stability in this world and no salvation in the next. In this first of his social novels, Bourget tackles the problem which is

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the base of all his social and religious theories: the conditions of existence of the family. Like De Bonald and Le Play, he is certain that the central unit of society is not the individual but rather the family.

The main thesis of *L'étape* is one of social stability, of the inadvisability of going through different social strata without proper and lengthy transitions. As an author he wished to demonstrate that a sudden change in social status exposes the person who has risen too quickly to difficulties of adaptation, and that a slow progress in social ascent is requisite for the harmonious development of the family. Traditions are necessary for the family as for the individual. Bourget is of the conviction that it is the whole family, instead of the individual, that should progressively rise. In this novel, where Joseph Monneron and his family represent unhealthy social ascent, Victor Ferrand is the *raisonneur*. He is the constant mouthpiece for Bourget. It is he who states that one's life should be the proof of the validity of one's thoughts. Unhappiness results from false ideas just as illness results from bad hygiene. Ferrand states the author's thesis, saying that all the unhappiness of the Monneron family can be ascribed to the fact that it did not develop according to natural laws. It is a victim of the democratic system which substitutes the individual for the family as the unit of society.

The thesis of *L'étape* is, of course, untenable. The social implication which Bourget expounds therein is applied too stringently and rigorously. The book satisfied neither the Catholics, the freethinkers, the royalists, nor the democrats. As in 1889 with *Le disciple*, so too *L'étape* created much controversy. It provoked a lively reaction among the writers, politicians, and clergymen of the period. Three distinct camps soon organized. The first, headed by Charles Maurras, enthusiastically applauded Bourget's thesis. They found in the novel a confirmation of their political views, as well as an opportunity to propagandize their social ideas. The second group, consisting of leftist writers and Catholic democrats, rejected Bourget's thesis in its entirety. They accused him of wishing to prevent all possible social ascent, of maintaining that any rise of an individual from one caste to another is contrary to social law. The last group, with Faguet, and later Giraud, as their leader, conceded that the thesis of *L'étape* was partially true. However, in general they found it to be "pushed slightly too far and not sufficiently established." In a stimulating article on *L'étape* in *La revue latine* (1902), Emile Faguet thoroughly analyzes the novel. Rejecting Bourget's thesis as unconvincing from an historical viewpoint, he cites the frequency with which men did, even in the *Ancien régime*, rise from a modest milieu to eminence in state or Church, the army or the arts.

Besides this major thesis of social class, there is also in *L'étape* a secondary theme intimately connected with the first. The Monneron children fall into evil and yield to temptation because they have been brought up outside of re-

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ligion and away from God. Catholicism, for Bourget, is the means of social stability. As a family which has grown contrary to the laws of healthy society, the Monnerons experience the absolute solitude in which members of such a poorly unified group find themselves at hours of crisis. They lack that inner cohesion of traditional households where each generation is but a moment of the same race or an episode in the same history. Julie Monneron faces temptation alone; empty and inefficacious principles, which have replaced sound religious precepts, will not help her. Through Jean Monneron, who is torn between two theories each covering all phases of life, social, political, and religious, Paul Bourget shows the social value of Catholicism. Jean is finally converted after having seen the fruitlessness of his father's teachings and the catastrophes which befall his family. On the other hand he sees the harmony, order, and peace which reign in the Ferrand family; Bourget wishes to illustrate in Monsieur Ferrand that discipline, restraint, and religious faith are necessities.

Bourget's most destructive criticism in *L'étape* is unceasingly directed against the democratic institutions of France. The author firmly believed that the evils of democracy would eventually lead to social and moral bankruptcy. Bourget criticizes democracy, as it was conceived in France, because he feels that it is not in keeping with the laws of science which he has observed. He came to the belief that one of the main laws of science is that of continuity, by which he means an uninterrupted development of all phases of life. For him, continuity is impossible when the people are sovereign, because the power changes with the majority of the electorate. Hence the reaching of democracy in France toward a "universel nivellement" is absurd and unfortunate. Such a leveling is opposed to Nature itself, because "Science demonstrates that the two laws of life from one end of the universe to the other are continuity and selection, a fact to which French democrats reply with the absurd dogma of democracy." Science teaches also that race, which he describes as the energy accumulated by our ancestors, is one of the most powerful factors of human personality. This fact Bourget declares contrary to the formula of the *Droit de l'homme*, which erects man himself as the first element in problems of government. Because of this belief, Bourget maintains that the disorder in public affairs is due in great measure to the parliamentary system and its basis of election. He believes that any state in which the only source of power lies in election by universal suffrage runs a great danger.

In his criticism of the democratic system of general compulsory education Bourget is equally severe. The wholesome family life of France, to be nourished and fortified, must have the support of religion and morality, he says, maintaining that the institution of lay education by democracy has wielded a fatal blow to whatever religious influence the home may have.

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Bourget, who in his *Essais* had proclaimed the individual to be the social unit, has thus undergone a radical change in belief by the time of *L'étape*. He has become fully convinced that in society, the unit of which is the family, united into classes, the individual develops to his greatest potentiality only when he most completely represents his class and trade. To him, the organization of society into classes does not suppose the complete impossibility of passing from one caste to another. However, there are laws that must be observed if this passage to a higher social stratum is to be wholesome and profitable, if it is not to result in the creation of groups of people who are *déracinés* and *déplantés*. As a natural consequence of these beliefs, he firmly supports the return of a monarchy whose head is recognized as ordained of God, and whose full effectiveness and permanence are assured by the laws of inheritance. An open nobility, recruited as it was during the *Ancien régime*, forms an aristocracy based on the principle of selection. The appeal to tradition, which permits the dead to speak, becomes an appeal to the race itself.

IN *Un divorce* (1904), his next novel, Bourget does not cover as much ground as in *L'étape*, which presented an entire *milieu*. *Un divorce* deals with a simple case, limited in its repercussions. By its nature the problem was able to appeal to a wider public. The question of marriage and its possible dissolution touches everyone intimately. The case studied is of such frequent occurrence that the incidents of the plot can be found in the most ordinary life.

Un divorce was published at a time when the question of divorce was the prominent subject of the day. The interest of the public had been aroused on this topic. In *Les tenailles* (1895) and *La loi de l'homme* (1897), Paul Hervieu had offered two works in which he attempted to defend the woman who is the slave of man and who cannot free herself when she awakens to the realization of her unhappy state. Again in 1899 Hugues Le Roux in his *Le bilan du divorce* advocates that divorce be granted when both marital parties express a desire for it. By 1902, the subject of divorce was loudly ringing in the ears of the public, whose interest had been aroused again by the Margueritte brothers. These writers, in their *Deux vies* and in their pamphlet *L'élargissement du divorce* (1902), had expressly advocated that divorce should be granted where even one partner so desired. This same thought was furthered when a petition was sent to the *parlement* under President Magnard, and also when Louis Barthou decided to take the first step in presenting a motion of law to do away with article 298 of the Civil Code, which made it unlawful for the guilty party to marry his or her accomplice. Newspapermen and writers aided to no small degree in propagating this discussion of divorce, so that soon the problem was crying for some sort of decision. It is, therefore, easy to conceive that the time was ripe for the publication of Bourget's *Un divorce*. Besides,

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it was no more than natural that the work should follow *L'étape*: it was Bourget's desire to complete his defense of the family.

In *Un divorce*, Bourget offers an open condemnation of divorce as a social institution. Herein he explains that the Catholic Church must maintain standards for society as a whole which cannot be lowered for a minority. His thesis is that since society is composed of families, as much as these families are worth, so much is society worth. In order that the family develop in normal fashion, it is essential that marriage be not a social link which can be broken at will but a lasting and permanent institution. History, he says, teaches that all superior civilizations have developed towards monogamy, whereas divorce is successive polygamy. When it exists, certain evil effects inevitably follow: hideous struggles take place between the former husband and wife over a child's sick-bed, a grown son's follies, a daughter's marriage; parents are judged and condemned by their children. Remarriage gives rise to fratricidal hatreds between the children of the first and of the second marriage and to antagonism between children and their step-parents. For Bourget the second marriage of a divorced person is, as the Catholic Church teaches, equivalent to a state of adultery. The Church seems to him the bulwark of family life, its doctrine of indissolubility of the marriage contract one of its surest and most reasonable dogmas.

Bourget attempts to show, in *Un divorce*, that those who live in free union or are remarried following divorce are full of contradiction. They cannot agree with themselves, with their own actions. Albert Darras, one of the protagonists, professes to be guided only by the dictates of his conscience, yet he refuses to give his consent to the marriage of his step-son Lucien to Berthe Planat and denies his wife the right to follow her conscience, when she comes to the realization that she is living separated from God. Lucien desires a marriage in accord with the existing Civil Code, yet he is moved by Berthe, a believer in free union, to agree with her belief. This paradoxical attitude is noted, too, in Gabrielle Darras who, although knowing that she is leading a life contrary to the teachings of religion, considers at various times the idea of finding anew her religious life and of sharing in the sacraments. She would like to be, at the same time, both with and against the Church.

Un divorce, though not as large in scope as *L'étape*, has, however, a force of conviction. Bourget has seen the real motivation of divorce. "For the writer, divorce rests upon just one element: sexual desire, and its satisfaction . . . And like every desire not curbed by a social discipline, it soon becomes noxious . . . In accepting divorce, one is close to accepting free union and even free love," says Paul Mannoni in *Les idées sociales de Paul Bourget*.

CLOSING the series of novels devoted to the family is *L'émigré* (1906). Although it is inferior to the two preceding works, still it discusses a very important thesis pertaining to the family. Bourget attempts to demonstrate that the French noble families can play an important role in the welfare and civilization of modern France. He presents the character of the Marquis de Claviers-Grandchamp as the mouthpiece for all the ideas which he never ceased to propagate in his articles and addresses. Through the Marquis, he indicates that there can be no growth or strength in a country unless the efforts of generations are added together, unless the living consider themselves a link between their ancestors and their descendants. He underlines three social truths that France should pay heed to: that to endure, families must take root and attach themselves to the soil, keeping the patrimonial domain undivided; that there must be a proper milieu for the maintenance of customs and morals, a milieu which cannot exist without distinct social classes and even the three orders of the Old Regime; that each individual is but the sum of those who have preceded him. All these truths he sees embodied in the noble houses of France. Bourget disapproves of the idleness and inactivity of the nobility. He manifests his regrets that the noblemen refuse to serve modern France, and that France refuses to utilize the services which these men might be able to render. On the contrary, France seeks to persecute, degrade, and ruin them.

L'étape, *Un divorce*, *L'émigré* reach the zenith of certitude and are therefore works of contention by means of which the author intends to convince us of three things: that absolute truth is on his side; that justice resides in the institutions which he defends; and that anarchy and ruin belong to the opposite side. Paul Bourget's purpose is not simply to produce works of art, creating characters who appear alive, who feel, who act, and who are his spiritual children who will develop in such a way as to conquer the sympathy of the readers. He is a defender of social and political conservatism, and of the doctrines of the Catholic Church. The characteristic feature of all his social novels is that they treat social problems containing political and religious teachings for the group, as well as moral lessons for the individual.

Review-Articles

Considering Gide

- André Gide romancier.* By Pierre Lafille. Paris: Hachette.
- André Gide l'insaisissable Protée.* By Germaine Brée. Paris: Les Belles Lettres.
- Portrait of André Gide.* By Justin O'Brien. Knopf. \$6.00.
- Les nourritures terrestres d'André Gide et les Bucoliques de Virgile.* By Justin O'Brien. Translated by Elisabeth van Rysselberghe. Boulogne-sur-Seine: Editions de la Revue Prétexte.
- Index détaillé de quinze volumes de l'édition Gallimard des Œuvres complètes d'André Gide.* By Justin O'Brien. Asnières-sur-Seine: Editions de la Revue Prétexte.
- André Gide.* By Enid Starkie. Yale University Press. \$2.50.
- André Gide-Paul Valéry: Correspondance 1890-1942.* Preface and Notes by Robert Mallet. Paris: Gallimard.
- Rilke, Gide et Valéry.* By Renée Lang. Boulogne-sur-Seine: Editions de la Revue Prétexte.
- Gide vivant.* Commentary by Jean Cocteau collected by Colin-Simon, with pages from Julien Green's *Journal*. Photographs by Dominique Darbois. Paris: Amiot-Dumont.
- La Vie d'André Gide.* By Claude Mahias. Preface and Documentation by Pierre Herbart. Collection, *Les Albums photographiques*. Paris: Gallimard.
- Une Mort ambiguë.* By Robert Mallet. Paris: Gallimard.
- Madeleine et André Gide.* By Jean Schlumberger. Paris: Gallimard.
- Le Problème d'André Gide.* By Henri Planche. Paris: Téqui.
- La Jeunesse d'André Gide: André Gide avant André Walter, 1869-1890.* By Jean Delay. Paris: Gallimard.

MENTION of the canonization of André Gide may puzzle readers who recall that, about a year after his death, his complete works were inscribed upon the Index. Condemnation and "canonization" were virtually simultaneous. For in 1952 Gide was accorded a place among the *Saints de notre Calendrier* in a tome thus entitled by the Sage of Unanimism, M. Jules Romains de l'*Académie française*, author of the twenty-seven volumes of *Les Hommes de bonne volonté* and a vast number of other productions. Yet this secular solemnity did not amount to more than a sectarian gesture. With the award five years earlier of the Nobel Prize (for which occasion the Romains tribute had in fact been prepared), official "consecration" of the Gide cult had already been effected.

But, if celebration of laical rites is one thing, exercise of direct influence is, as the case of Anatole France would indicate, quite something else. Although Gide carefully disclaimed responsibility for consequences of the ideas which, with a fervor so brilliantly insinuating, he put into circulation, and although, until he had acquired both disciples and influence, he professed distaste for both, there was in these declarations something disingenuous or, if you will, a special sort of sincerity. For he manifested consistently, and on occasion overtly, aspirations toward a role as molders and directors of youthful consciences and convictions comparable to the one exercised so long and with such despotism elo-

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quence by Maurice Barrès. Toward the latter writer Gide's sentiments appear to have been saturated with more than his usual ambivalence and ambiguity. Living or dead, Barrès remained for him *the* rival. Divergences between the thought, character, and action of Barrès and those of Gide are obvious; less immediately apparent are their affinities.

The two of them were born into the French upper middle class, well-to-do, cultivated, seemingly secure. Upon both of them Taine's theory of "la race, le milieu, le moment," made an enduring impression. In each of them an element, not normally blatant, of rather literary "scientism" co-existed with somewhat sketchy scientific "knowledge." They reacted emphatically, if diversely, to the notion of "la terre et les morts": for Barrès it represented fulfilment, an all-purpose formula; for Gide, an obstacle hopefully resolving itself into an "état de dialogue," that of "deux sangs, deux provinces, deux confessions" and, eventually, "deux astres différents."

To neither Gide nor Barrès was it given to be a poet, a lack compensated, for them as for Rousseau, by aptitude for romantic revery in admirably cadenced prose. Cocteau relates that "d'après certaines confidences de Ghéon à l'époque de leur brouille, Gide aurait beaucoup souffert de n'être pas poète (ce qui était le cas de Barrès). *Les Nourritures terrestres* furent, paraît-il, à l'origine, un texte en vers, dont il ne se tirait pas et qu'il transforma en aphorismes." Both Gide and Barrès were masters of prose style with an intermittent tendency toward preciosity. Both of them felt strongly the attraction of Chateaubriand's musical phrase, Stendhal's glorification of energy, the "egotism" omnipresent in René as in Henri Brulard. An adequate fund of "ferveur" was tempered, for Gide as for Barrès, by more than ample pragmatism, doubt, cynicism, and almost entire moral relativism. Barrès maintained a show of interest in history and, in a sense, metaphysics; but one is not persuaded that, actually, they mattered much more to him than they mattered to Gide, who found them boring and even repugnant. And was not religion, for which both of them professed anything but casual concern, above all, for the one as for the other, an admirable pretext for literature?

The preoccupation with social and political problems which, ultimately, both of them chose to manifest, not without a dash of demagogic astuteness, represented for Gide as for Barrès a necessary extension of a hypertrophied "culte du moi" (outgrowth, perhaps, in the one case as in the other, of an initially deficient store of vital energy and a consequent basic sense of insecurity). Although one might, not unfairly, describe Gide's internationalism as a form of Barresian nationalism *à rebours*, yet Gide was not devoid of patriotism nor Barrès of curiosity as to what lay beyond the confines of his snug little, smug little Lorraine. Each of them had his exotic specialty or, one might say, his personal Orient, skillfully selected from a multitude of possible Orients. Both of them were at the same time cosmopolite and provincial: upon the intellectual and spiritual formation of both of them a Germanic habit of nostalgic and imprecise speculation (so fashionable in the Symbolist circles in which they came to maturity) and a French habit of shrewd and persuasive practicality, had operated decisively. And both Gide and Barrès were, primarily and finally, men of letters, passionately eager for the fame, success, disciples, and influence which both of them, Barrès very early, Gide after years of waiting, so abundantly achieved. Each of them erected an attitude into a personality and hoisted it into public eminence. Yet there was and remained, in each case, an essential ambiguity in the attitude.

At present, a third of a century after his death, the influence of Barrès appears as definitively buried as his "union sacrée" and his peculiar variety of national chauvinism. Current velleities toward resuscitating it are understandably anaemic. For the doctrines of Barrès have aged, but not gracefully: they have simply dated. Everything that made them narrow, repellant, unintelligent, and even absurd, is far more cruelly evident today than it was when the literary Boulangist, anti-Dreyfusard, and nationalist deputy was haranguing his League of Patriotards in clichés worthy of Paul Déroulède. And, likewise, the direct influence of André Gide (a different thing from his prestige) seems considerably to have waned. Is any important revival of it likely in the foreseeable future? It is, of course, far too soon to say; but the answer might well be: probably not. But Gide is still very close to us. His *indirect* influence remains very potent and well, I believe, be strongly with us for a great many years to come. And, while Gide as writer has now entered into the literary purgatory into which all authors must pass and from which so few ever emerge, the Gide cult continues to function with hopeful vigor.

THE immediate problem obstructing any estimate of Gide pretending to even tentative adequacy is that of disentangling the literary achievement of the writer from the no less literary legend of the man, a sort of latter-day Jean-Jacques only more so. Yet of the fourteen volumes on our present list only those by Lafille and Germaine Brée are concerned primarily with Gide as literary artist in spite of the Master's own well-grounded warning that "le point de vue esthétique est le seul où il faille se placer pour parler de mon œuvre saine-mement." Conceived and executed, I presume, as a thesis (one shudders to think of the innumerable and ineffable theses which, in years to come, are certain to be "consecrated" to Gide), Pierre Lafille's thick book has substantial merits. If the literary analyses do not abound in rare insights, if the critical judgments often lack acuity, if the author frequently mistakes for "sources" or semi-sources what look like rather banal and unpremeditated encounters, if the writing plods along at a level of somewhat uniform flatness, these are defects almost ineradicable from this type of composition. Lafille has dredged up from his study of the texts a mass of materials, excellently indexed, for critics to make use of. He has done a useful job of groundbreaking. His presentation, if at times dull, is coherent. He has included a comprehensive bibliography, conveniently arranged in alphabetized order, of books and articles on Gide. One has a sense of sustained, conscientious effort, not wasted, as so many of our domestic academic labors are, on trivia and sub-trivia.

Germaine Brée had already written a valuable book on Proust (there are not too many good ones). To say of her study of Gide that it fulfils expectations is to grant it the high praise which it deserves. It is the best critical treatment of Gide's work since Jean Hytier's of a dozen years ago, an achievement which, without superseding, it most usefully complements. She has a flair for the essential in critical problems, a manner of meeting them directly and dealing with them straightforwardly. Critics of Gide and his writings tend to parrot established formulas, many of them originally set in circulation by the Master himself. The resulting impression is one of fuzzy cliché and pallid platitude. Germaine Brée brushes these formulas rather easily aside: what she has to say of Gide's literary achievement is not hackneyed. Her perceptions are brilliant: her analyses reach unfamiliar depths.

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She is persuaded that Gide's merits are more considerable than they might seem: he is so often praised for the wrong reasons. He was not, in any sense, a "great thinker"; his "ideas," his intelligence and culture notwithstanding, were meager, and further limited in their relevance by his obsession with his own sexual anomaly. His conclusions were frequently inadequate and unexpectedly naive. The area of his experience was not wide (he was never to know economic necessity nor, indeed, any sort of really compulsive external pressure), while a great part of that experience was, in the pejorative sense, "literary." At no moment of his life, in fact, does the Protean and Narcissistic Gide seem to have ceased to live and act the part of man of letters. But his superlative literary virtuosity made it possible for him to inform his rather sparse materials with enduring vitality. He found in and took from Goethe, Nietzsche, Whitman, Blake, Dostoevsky, Montaigne, and others, many others, what he needed and was looking for—just that and no more. His *récits* have been perhaps overpraised, his *soit*es not adequately appreciated. His plays, while interesting, are not really successful. The *Faux-Monnayeurs*, in which he transcended his normal limitations, represents the high point of his accomplishment, a contribution which remains impressive. He worked out new forms, added something of value to the novel. In his latter years virtually all of his talent went into his enormous *Journal*.

The performances of Justin O'Brien and Enid Starkie are far less interesting. It is true that what they attempted was far less ambitious. Whereas, by assuming on the reader's part some familiarity with the texts, Germaine Brée was able to concentrate upon critical problems, O'Brien and Enid Starkie undertook to provide an Anglo-American public with necessary factual minima for awakening interest and rendering the man and his work intelligible to neophytes. For such a task both writers were unusually well qualified. Enid Starkie, author of two creditable if by no means scintillating books on Rimbaud, useful syntheses into which she incorporated essential new findings (with regard especially to the poet's Abyssinian years of gun-smuggling and would-be slave-trading), had been largely responsible for bringing Gide to Oxford to receive an honorary degree. O'Brien, who has done important pioneer work culminating in a translation of the mammoth *Journal* in its entirety, probably knows more about Gide than anyone else this side of the Atlantic. The index to the fifteen volumes of the Gallimard edition of the *Œuvres complètes*, compiled with the aid of students in O'Brien's Gide seminar, is a useful tool. His short essay (translated by Elisabeth van Rysseberghe, Mme. Pierre Herbart, mother of Gide's daughter—relationships in such a family are anything but simple) in which he notes indebtedness of the *Nourritures terrestres* to Virgil's *Bucolics*, points the way toward more comprehensive treatment of this topic. From Virgil also, as from Blake and Dostoevsky, Gide took what he wanted and felt that he needed. Both Miss Starkie and O'Brien had known Gide during the final years of fame and would appear to have possessed a fair share of his confidence.

Miss Starkie's brief guidebook to Gide, the man and the work, is a much slighter affair than O'Brien's *Portrait*, yet the virtues and failings of the two books are very largely the same. The primary purpose of both is evidently hagiographical. The important thing for the two of them is the Gide legend, which they present in almost the exact form in which the Master himself elected to transmit it. Only rarely, and on secondary points, do critical reserves ripple across the surface of this new orthodoxy.

YET (properly ironic circumstance) at the moment when Miss Starkie and O'Brien were performing their respective obeisances, a great part of that legend was already passing into obsolescence. Testimonies were rapidly multiplying: they are still flowing in. It is true that we have not yet received the evidence of M. Marc Allegret, nor that of Mme. Elisabeth van Rysselberghe-Herbat, nor that of Gide's daughter, Mme. Jean Lambert, nor that of his nephew, M. Dominique Drouin. No doubt Mme. Théo van Rysselberghe and M. Pierre Herbat have yet a great deal to tell us, and no doubt they eventually will. There are, of course, innumerable others still to be heard from, since (and especially when he had attained notoriety and celebrity) Gide knew and talked to a vast number of people. It is unlikely that, during those last years, anyone whom he favored with a few minutes of conversation can have neglected to rush home and note down in his own *journal intime* the substance of what had just been said. Yet we are already in possession of an imposing body of testimony, the consequent effect of which is to modify, bit by bit, our understanding of Gide. Only the most naively fervent can still affect to accept the legend without radical qualification.

Of these *témoignages* perhaps the most valuable from a literary point of view is contained in the Gide-Valéry letters, with introduction and notes by Robert Mallet, the inveterate editor of correspondences, a publication completed by Renée Lang's plaquette on *Rilke, Gide and Valéry*, a natural by-product. It is true that, in both books, the role of André Gide remains secondary. Valéry's letters are very full and very brilliant; Gide's seem, by contrast, disappointingly pallid. Mallet does well to remind us that, in his youth, André Walter (not yet become André Gide) aspired to be the best friend of each of his friends; his epistolary performances are, then, better than one might reasonably expect.

The tone of the early letters is that of two Mallarmean souls vibrating in exalted, precious, sentimental, and literary unison. Communication is easily, if vaguely, achieved, since each of the two young Symbolists projects into the other what he himself needs and seeks. Their interests and aspirations seem so intimately allied, so nearly identical (Corydon remains notably absent), as to veil cardinal differences of aptitude and temperament in a thick mist of rhetorical effervescence. Later, as each of the correspondents becomes more accurately aware of himself and of his own vocation, and sees the other more clearly for what he actually is, comes a shift in temperature, and the correspondence tapers off. Each of them, having selected his attitude, is busied with shaping his legend and according his life and work to it: Valéry's, that of inhumanly lucid thinker and (eventually) official virtuoso; Gide's, that of evangelizing immoralist and (ultimately) professionally sincere nonconformist.

Gide appears to have suffered from an increasing sense of intellectual inferiority to Valéry, a feeling comparable in nature to that of his avowed weakness before the spiritual robustness of Paul Claudel. It is true that, the *Nourritures terrestres* notwithstanding, he was not a poet ("sans doute," suggests Cocteau, "le vrai drame de Gide est de n'être pas poète"). He lacked the gift of seeing in poetic images, and his rhythms were not suited to expression in verse. But, in Paul Valéry and Paul Claudel, he was confronting the two major poets of his generation. And Valéry's ironies, furthermore, were so much more corrosive, his negations so much more savagely pulverizing, than Gide's own optimistic and literary coquetries with doubt, evasion, and hypothetical belief. What, in comparison with Valéry's *reductio ad absurdum* of all justification

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for existence, were such trifles as Gide's watered-down Nietzscheism and his *acte gratuit*? A few hours of conversation with Valéry, Gide admits in his *Journal*, would reduce him to a state of exhaustion bordering on annihilation. For Valéry demolished everything (in conversation, that is; for he made no attempt to conform his life to preconceived literary and philosophical patterns; like Hume, he lived as if the everyday world of cause and effect existed and made sense). As for Valéry's opinion of his correspondent, one has the impression that the later development of Gide did not interest him much and that he was no longer capable of taking the friend of his youth very seriously. It is not probable that, in the end, either of them had retained many illusions about the other.

The testimony of Jean Cocteau is also valuable. No more than Valéry was he likely to be taken in by anyone. That, in spite of obvious differences, affinities likewise existed between Gide and Cocteau is hardly contestable. Yet, in their relations seems always to have subsisted an underlying constraint: a reasonably convincing show of keeping up appearances but never any authentic cordiality. It is evident that each of them consistently mistrusted the other. Each of them had something feline in his makeup, and their successive sincerities rarely coincided. Although Cocteau affirms that "nous ne vendions pas les mêmes marchandises," he adds that Gide "craignait que les jeunes ne préférassent mes marchandises aux siennes." The rivalry, in any event, existed and endured. George Painter may or may not have been warranted in suggesting that Gide ended his *Passavant* of the *Faux-Monnayeurs* with recognizable traits of his confrère Cocteau; but it seems established that, as *Passavant* to Edouard in the novel, Cocteau gave Gide at times a feeling of sentimental insecurity. It may be that, here again, Gide suffered from a sense of inferiority, knowing himself incapable of competing with Cocteau (also a poet) in the latter's domain of imaginative verbal pyrotechnics.

Cocteau's attitude toward Gide is, of course, characteristically self-revelatory; but what it tells us about Gide is of the highest relevance. By sheer brilliancy of wit he achieves, as usual, merciless insights. He suggests (and it would be unfair to question his competence in the matter) that "Gide était une fraude vivante." He adds that

Faux jeton est un pléonasme. Gide était un vrai jeton. Un jeton de salle de jeu. Ce jeton équivalait à une grosse somme.

Mais il fallait se soumettre aux démarches du change.

On n'avait pas exactement en main cette somme mais une plaque précieuse qui la représentait.

Furthermore: "Il n'a jamais répugné à un certain exhibitionnisme à la Rousseau, mais si on le contourne, on découvrira le sourire de Voltaire." He observes astutely enough that "Gide n'allait ni loin ni trop loin, il a toujours avoué de petites choses pour ne pas avouer de grandes" [recent psychoanalytical studies of Gide appear to confirm Cocteau's impression]. "Et l'on remarquera que les vices dont il s'affuble sont toujours d'ordre pittoresque: on peut leur donner le Prix Nobel." But how, one asks, is one to understand Cocteau's final remark that "en fin de compte, nos chiffres si différents arrivent à produire le même total"? One wonders what Gide himself would have made of it.

Robert Mallet's book is chiefly interesting for what it tells us about Gide, Claudel, and Paul Léautaud, with all of whom, in performance of his editorial

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duties, he was in fairly sustained contact. Not that what he has to tell us is very new or very startling. But it has its value in clarifying our understanding of three extremely diverse "grand old men" of French literature. Claudel's contemptuous dismissal of Gide as a malefactor of no literary importance; Gide's resentment at Claudel's withering indifference (if only Claudel had made some slight overtures, with what exemplary ferocity would he—or would he not?—have rejected them!); Léautaud's dogged and rather dated skepticism—Mallet's conversations record all these things and more. He obtrudes, perhaps too frequently, his own observations, which are unevenly interesting. He is not timid with his great men: his method appears to have been to provoke sparks by going the limit; at times he exceeds it and attains impertinence. He offers Gide excellent criticism of the dramatized version of the *Caves du Vatican*; on one occasion he attempts to push the Master to the wall; the spectacle of Gide's uneasiness when confronted with, and his imperviousness to, any sort of logical argument, is curious. Mallet finds Gide more sympathetic and understandable than Claudel; Léautaud at times distinctly irks him. But his real grievance is that not one of them makes the least effort to convert him; that not one of them takes account of him as a friend or even as a person; that all three of them tend to view him as a useful sort of literary domestic or glorified errand-boy. He rightly stresses the significance of Gide's last ambiguous gesture: his refusal to leave instructions concerning the disposal of his body and the kind of obituary rites (if any) which he desired, an omission which gave rise to a rather grotesque squabble at the moment of his burial in Cuverville. We are left wondering just how "serene" Gide's end actually was.

ONE might have supposed that, after the publication of *Et nunc manet in te*, not very much had been left unsaid about Gide's astounding marriage. Jean Schlumberger's little book proves how hasty we were. It is an attempt, by a friend whose intimacy with both Madeleine and André extended over many years, and whose affection for both of them is beyond question, to rectify proportions and set perspectives straight. In Gide's posthumous "tribute," says Schlumberger, he appears to have been impelled by some mysterious and irresistible urge to distort, deform, and falsify the image of his wife which he intended to be the definitively accepted one:

Pas un mot ou un geste de la disparue si ce n'est en fonction de lui-même. Pas un de ces traits délicats qu'un homme garde dans le secret de sa mémoire et dont il se réjouit de parer l'image de l'être qu'il souhaite faire admirer. Tout au contraire, une sorte de complaisance à étaler toutes les infirmités qui peuvent humilier un corps vieillissant et flétrir ses dernières grâces. Des étalages de repentir qui se resorbaient en trop visibles essais de justification; le triste bilan d'un amour en ruines, qui n'a su trouver qu'in *extremis* quelques jours apaisés.

When, during the crisis in their relations which came to a head in 1918, Mme. Gide burned her husband's letters, she neglected to destroy her own. She also overlooked a *journal intime* which she had kept for about a year and a half, January 1891 to July 1892, several years prior to their marriage. It is from, among other things, these previously unpublished materials that Schlumberger draws sustenance for his thesis that, all things considered, this amazing marriage was a successful marriage. It was in no sense a mistake. Why, in spite

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of an evident desire for children, should not Gide's Emmanuèle-Alissa have been more than content with the strangely etherealized love ("le meilleur de moi-même") which Gide urged upon her? If, having dissociated love from desire (in the pages of *Corydon* he put them back together), he left her again and again to seek adventure and fruits of the earth, had she cause for complaint? She would, in any event, have lacked the spiritual stamina and physical endurance which, for ascent to his conception of "la joie," would have been absolute prerequisites. And, finally, what a privilege for any woman, the role of *témoin* in the life of a man of genius!

It is true that acceptance of that role was not invariably easy. Gide's trip to England with M.A. and the part which, as friend of the youth's parents, she had involuntarily played in rendering that trip possible: an exciting application of the ethic of "la joie," but not too delightful for the one who remained behind. For this was something altogether different from the Arab adventures; here was no dissociation of love and desire; it was, on the contrary, a flagrant application of the theory expounded in *Corydon*, an enthusiastic betrayal of the "higher love" which he had so elaborately invented. When she opposed his departure, Gide left her a letter containing a parting shot of almost unparalleled ferocity: "*Près de toi je pourrissais.*" From a Dante to his Beatrice, from a Petrarch to his Laura, a new note, a distinctly modern note. And "le meilleur de moi-même"? That, upon his return home (for he had always the certitude of a home to return to), Gide should have expected to find everything as he had left it, is perhaps the most incredible thing of all. Instead, as we know, he found his letters burned ("le meilleur de moi-même"—"peut-être n'y eut-il jamais de plus belle correspondance"); he wept for a week without ceasing; and he could never understand why his wife made no move to comfort him. And, finally, whether or not she was aware of little Catherine's paternity, it can have been with slight pleasure that Mme. Gide found herself supplanted by the van Rysselberghe's, who became effectively her husband's second family.

One gathers that there was in Gide a considerable fund of sadism, although it would be difficult to say just how far he was consciously aware of it. His attitude toward his mother, as *Si le grain ne meurt* makes clear, was strongly ambivalent. There seems little reason to doubt that, in his wife, his mother's brother's daughter, he found an acceptable substitute for and successor to his mother, someone who would continue to offer him the same anxious and indestructible affection to which his mother had accustomed him. She was two years older than he and, he tells us, after some years of marriage looked old enough to be taken for his mother. That she continued to matter a great deal to him is evident; one can say even that he "loved" her if one is careful immediately to add that his hatred for her, co-existing with that love, was equally intense. He takes pleasure in opposing and punishing her as, had he dared, he would have liked to oppose and punish his mother—voluptuous wish-fulfilment! For here the roles are reversed: the son dominates and the mother submits. He does as he pleases with absolute impunity: he is free to wander off at any time, to go any place he chooses, to seek whatever adventure may suit his caprice, to come home (with no need to excuse or justify himself) when he has had, for the time being, enough of it. In the episode of the burnt letters he is able to enjoy to the full the delights of self-pity. But the mother-wife must in the end beg forgiveness, and doesn't. Very well then, she must be punished. And Gide's ul-

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timate vengeance takes a peculiarly perfidious and atrocious form: a "homage" in which he imposes upon posterity, in the name of "sincerity," a horribly grimacing image of her.

Henri Planché does not go so far as this: he might even disagree with most of what I have just said. In the space of a few short pages he attempts a posthumous psychoanalytic study of Gide, with whom he was not personally acquainted. His analysis remains rather incomplete and superficial, but his findings are, generally speaking, acceptable as far as they go. He accepts the notion, outlined in the preceding paragraph, of the wife as mother-substitute. There was, in his opinion, nothing "inevitable" about Gide's homosexuality.

THE 600-page volume of Jean Delay goes very much deeper. He knew Gide fairly well during his last years, is thoroughly familiar with his work, and has had access to numerous and important unpublished family documents, of which the most important is unquestionably Gide's correspondence with his mother. The problem which Delay sets himself is that of tracing the steps by which the child of *Si le grain ne meurt* became André Walter. A second volume will attempt to account for the metamorphosis, during the years 1890 and 1895, of André Walter into André Gide. The album of photographs put together by Claude Mahias supplements such a study with valuable iconographic materials. These include, notably, certain photographs mentioned, and photographs of people mentioned, in the autobiography. By being able to see Gide as he looked at various stages of his life, one is able to follow Delay's analysis with added interest and understanding.

Delay's method is patient and thorough. He follows *Si le grain ne meurt* step by step, carefully checking the facts and interpretations as Gide gives them against those same facts (and alternative interpretations) as recorded in family correspondence and other private documents. Why and how did André Gide become the literary artist that he was? Delay does not take too seriously Gide's own account of himself as an *être de dialogue*, result of a crossing of two races (Northern and Latin), two provinces (Normandy and the Midi), two religions (Catholic and Protestant), and two stars (Scorpio and Sagittarius). For it would not easily be possible to discover a heredity more completely French than that of André Gide. Are the Normans less French than the inhabitants of Uzès? Is the Midi less French than Normandy? For two or three generations at least, furthermore, the religious influences in the Rondeaux as well as in the Gide family had been overwhelmingly Protestant (with, in the case of the former, an occasional dash of outright unbelief). As to the two stars, there is no reason to suppose that Gide put much faith in astrology. Delay is unwilling, likewise, to accept at face value Gide's theory that (as his biographer summarizes it) "ce serait l'anomalie dont il souffre qui pousserait le novateur à la recherche de nouvelles normes et la maladie qui le contraindrait à l'originalité." This would amount to little more than a restatement of Max Nordau's "scientific" formula, happily outdated, that "genius = degeneration." The problem, then, for Delay is, as we have already seen: How was it possible for the neurotic child and sick adolescent portrayed in *Si le grain ne meurt* to achieve catharsis and consequent equilibrium by means of artistic creation?

Delay examines the background of the Gide and Rondeaux families in considerable detail, for it would be difficult to understand the young André without some prior comprehension of the family environment and social class which

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contributed so largely to his development during the crucial period of his childhood. Study of Gide's parents yields a number of details of a certain importance. The union of M. and Mme. Paul Gide was perhaps a less "happy" marriage than it seemed. Mme. Gide, a rather masculine-appearing woman with little in the way of beauty or charm, apparently suffered, not merely during girlhood but throughout all of her later life (and especially by contrast with her young "governess," the attractive Anna Shackleton), from painful feelings of inferiority and shyness. Possessing greater force of character than her husband, she was aware of being, culturally and intellectually, far beneath him. For these felt shortcomings she attained compensation by exercise of harsh authoritarian rule over her son and servants and by religious practices of a puritanical severity unusual even among French Protestants.

André Gide, an only child, poor little rich boy, excessively nervous and self-conscious, cruelly hypersensitive, found himself abandoned at the age of eleven to the fussy and anxious attention of three widowed women, his mother and two aunts. Like his mother before him, he feels insecure, inferior, continually repressed and frustrated. He develops ruses (simulated sickness, for example) as means of combatting this domestic tyranny. He also seeks escape in a romantic and "platonic" attachment to his cousin Madeleine, a less forbidding mother-figure.

The young Gide is, then, a being profoundly ill, psychically sick. His Protestantism binds him to frequent examinations of his conscience and motives. It raises for him, in its most acute and absolute form, the awful problem of integral "sincerity." Eventually, of course, his beliefs evaporate: Protestantism leads him, as so many others, to doubt, evasion, and negation as the final sincerity. Is he ever completely sincere? But, even when he is deliberately simulating fainting fits and nervous disorders, when he is consciously play-acting, is he ever altogether *insincere*? Ultimately, as we know, he achieved "compensation" by the practice of literature. Delay's detailed analysis of the *Cahiers d'André Walter* is, in this connection, very important. It does not seem likely that, by any other means, he could have attained the balance, the emotional, intellectual, and social adjustment which, if he chose to go on living, was so vitally necessary.

The rather forbidding classification of the work as a "psychobiography" should not deter readers. Delay writes well: there is not an excessive amount of technical jargon in his book. His tone is that of judicious, sympathetic understanding. One awaits the second volume, if one knows enough about Gide to want to know more, with a very lively interest.

It is, of course, far too soon to attempt, in terms which might pretend to any degree of finality, an evaluation of the work and personality of André Gide. The evidence, as we previously noted, is anything but complete. But already we feel that we have achieved a more adequate understanding of Gide than, even a few short years ago, would have been possible. So profound has his influence been, and so deep-seated does his indirect influence continue to be (and seem likely to go on being) that we cannot afford not to arrive at the fullest possible comprehension of André Gide: his personality, work, and influence, and what ultimately they may signify.

University of Illinois (Chicago)

JOHN H. MEYER

Apology and Explanation

The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold. By Evelyn Waugh. Little, Brown. \$3.75.

Roman Holiday: The Catholic Novels of Evelyn Waugh. By A. A. De Vitis. Bookman. \$2.50.

THE American critic, Edmund Wilson, has said that the secret of Evelyn Waugh's early success was his audacity; "never apologize, never explain"—an injunction of the great Jowett of Balliol—is the keynote and title of his article (v. *Classics and Commercials*, 1951, pp. 140-146). Waugh has never explained his works; but he has never ceased to apologize for them. Not, of course, in an orgy of overt self-depreciation, but implicitly, in the works themselves. What is his succession of bounders and outsiders, Basil Seal, Ambrose Silk, Anthony Blanche, if not the stages in a continuing propitiatory rite for the horror of being a writer—a satirical writer, indeed—in a world of honorable men? Why does he send Sebastian Flyte on the bottle if not to punish him for that self-regarding languor which is the flush of artistic inspiration? Does he not punish himself, in the guise of Tony Last, for clinging to the outmoded world of the nineteenth century—Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*, and Dickens' *Bleak House*; and in Scott-King's *dimness* for his withdrawal from the modern world of Picasso, plastics, and political hospitality? There is no doubt, for his audacity he has apologized, for his self-regarding romanticism he has atoned. What he has not done is to cease writing. So in his latest novel, *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold*, Waugh allows all the negative aspects of his creative personality to rise up in accusation against him, faces them, and talks them down.

The occasion was an unpredictable gift of fortune. Some time after his fiftieth birthday an internal crisis combined with bouts of rheumatism caused him to have increasing recourse to self-medication by alcohol and a sleeping-draft mixture of bromide and chloral. His condition becoming worse, he set off on a sea-trip to Ceylon. Hardly had he stepped onto the ship when the super-excitation of his drugged senses caused him to be pursued by hallucinatory voices. He left the ship at Port Said, flew to Colombo, then back home. Discontinuance of the drugs, the realization that the persons with whom he had associated his voices did not exist, and the stimulus at being presented with a chunk of new, raw experience to shape, quite cured Waugh, who now gives us, under the transparent disguise of Gilbert Pinfold, what might be called the book of the film.

There are several things in this book, aptly called "A Conversation Piece." There is, firstly, Chapter One, "Portrait of the Artist in Middle Age," the longest and most balanced account that anyone has yet given of Pinfold-Waugh, the prosperous writer bringing up a large family on a small country estate. There is, secondly, the tragi-comic account of Mr. Pinfold's ordeal by voices on the SS. Caliban (that monstrous ship), Captain Steerforth master, outward bound from Liverpool for Colombo, written with Waugh's complete mastery of narrative and of dialogue technique. The reader may regard the book as an "entertainment," which it richly is, and stop at this point. One side of Mr. Pinfold's mind also stops here. To go beyond this point, one must be either a critic or an analyst—it is not even clear whether these two roles can here be distinguished. As critic, then, one may go on and try to explain the whole sequence of events. This is the third thing of interest in the work; like all critical interpretations,

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it is true in so far as it carries conviction with the subject or the reader, but no further.

One must, of course, clearly understand Mr. Pinfold's predicament. He is not deranged. He is in full possession of all his senses and faculties except one, that of hearing, which consistently hands him fallacious material. Being of acute rational intelligence he proceeds to construct an explanation which satisfies his mind and explains the phenomena; he is in the position of the pre-Copernican observer of the heavenly bodies. If the world is flat you might reasonably expect to hear the voices of Antipodeans when approaching the edge. If you do not know that your auditory sense is manufacturing its own material you infer from the evidence of the voices a well thought out plan to harry you—whether it is a joke, in bad taste, or more sinister in intent, you do not know. Mr. Pinfold's mind, before he left England, was occupied by two things. One was a recorded interview on his life and opinions which he had made, much against his desires, at the insistence of the B.B.C. The other was a superstitious form of treatment for disease, to which some of his country neighbours were addicted, which involved the use of a mysterious instrument called "the Box." What more rational explanation, therefore, could present itself to Mr. Pinfold's mind than that the ship was equipped with some radio-communication system of technical complexity, but functioning intermittently, which was controlled by his pet aversion, Mr. Angel, the engineer from the B.B.C. After a few false starts, the picture is complete—perfectly clear, and entirely false.

All this is, of course, to start at the wrong end. The reader, with Mr. Pinfold, is plunged straight into the ordeal. A maddening jazz rhythm starts up under his feet; someone—apparently a clergyman—reproves someone else—presumably a seaman—for immodest practices. A lascar is injured—right outside Mr. Pinfold's port-hole—in an operation conducted by a bullying officer. A steward is accused—falsely perhaps—of immodest advances to the Captain's mistress, and is tortured by the depraved pair to death. A group of hooligans plan a common assault on Pinfold. As the ship approaches Gibraltar the Spaniards want to arrest and search it for a British agent; the agent must get through, but Mr. Pinfold is to be handed over in his place—he is a sick man, and therefore expendable. The ship's radio blares out abuse of Mr. Pinfold's published works from—presumably—a B.B.C. programme. Mr. Pinfold's tormentors have recruited half the passengers on the ship to assist them in their fell work. And all these things on a British ship. Mr. Pinfold is alternately harrowed, aghast, indignant, enraged, irritated—but finally bored and, on occasions, amused. He counterattacks—changes his cabin, complains to the captain, talks the voices down, leaves the ship—the voices have his wave-length, and so are not really dependent on cables; they use *wireless*, not *wires*. All ends well on his return to his family.

One critic thought the action had no proper peak and dénouement, but neither, he added, has any case-history. One can see what he means, but the judgment is profoundly mistaken. An external action may need an external crisis and dénouement. An internal action, including a genuine case-history of disintegration and re-integration of the personality, has its own drama. It may appear to tail off, like the voices, but long before that point the battle is fought and won. So also with Mr. Pinfold. First comes the desire of the mind to explain—though the construction is entirely false; then the determination to

resist—Mr. Pinfold in his cabin, blackthorn stick in one hand, malacca cane in the other, prepared to repel boarders—and none appears. Then the challenge to his enemies to come and face him; pursued by the voices over his breakfast he grasps the table lamp thinking it to be a microphone, and summons them all to answer for their misdeeds in the lounge. Their courage fails; recrimination and dissension break out; their plots are ill-calculated. Then he exacts on them exquisite revenge. They have got his wave-length, so that he cannot escape from their voices? Good, then they cannot get away from his. So he takes a copy of *Westward Ho!* out of the ship's library and reads to them from this Victorian classic hour by hour, page by page, line by line, every second line, every second word, reads the words backwards, till they implore him to desist. Readers of *A Handful of Dust* will appreciate the full satisfaction of this revenge: Tony Last, condemned to read Dickens for ever in the jungle to the sinister Mr. Todd, has turned the tables on his captor.

In the long run, however, the neurosis is defeated by revelation to an outside person. The sick man goes to the analyst; Mr. Pinfold speaks to the Captain—the voices suffer their first major reverse. He writes home, then flies home, to Mrs. Pinfold. The voices are defeated.

At a certain stage, "Mr. Pinfold's orderly, questing mind began to sift the huge volume of charges which had been made against him." The reader will too, but he will be advised to cast orderliness to the winds, or he will only conclude with Mr. Pinfold that the charges were a jumble of preposterous and inconsistent assertions. It is preposterous to assert that he disgraced himself at Oxford, became a Catholic to ingratiate himself with the landed aristocracy, laid false claim to being an old-Etonian, and an ex-Guards officer. Or if he did, then he could demonstrably not have been a foreign refugee, a homosexual, a Fascist, Communist, a German Jew. Neither could he have let his poor old, immigrant mother die in indigence. Had he not, a few days before, taken a dutiful farewell of her in London? A farrago of nonsense, richly comic when proceeding from impassive English spinsters knitting away on the promenade deck, but no more.

Yes and no. Waugh knows more than Mr. Pinfold about all this. Waugh was not Basil Seal, the cad, Ambrose Silk, the aesthete, Anthony Blanche, the pansy—but perhaps in one way he was. The artist is a man of many masks. Perhaps he was the customs officer who, in *Vile Bodies*, confiscated all the hero, Adam Fenwick-Symes, had in the world—his author's manuscript: "that's just downright dirt, and we burns that straight away, see." Perhaps he was also Mr. Todd, crushing out of existence that other side of himself, romantic and trusting, which dreamed of lancet and oriel windows and trusted the savages, in England as in Brazil. Perhaps, even, he is Captain Steerforth—that stolid British sailor who presides so affably night after night at dinner at the Captain's table, to which Mr. Pinfold, on boarding the ship, is invited. Nothing is impossible. Not a cad this time, or an aesthete, or a Brazilian settler, but a man of unimpeachable professional and social standing—like Mr. Pinfold. But, of course, Mr. Pinfold, through the revelations of the voices, has his own private information that this man commands a ship in which scenes are enacted "which might have come straight from the kind of pseudo-American thriller he most abhorred." Of course, he keeps a smiling and impassive exterior: "at table Captain Steerforth carried his anxieties with splendid composure," not

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withstanding, as Pinfold well knows, he has only recently been an associate in the torturing of one of the stewards. So Pinfold cautiously brings the conversation round to murder. "If you ask me all murderers are mad," says one of the passengers. "'And always smiling,' said Mr. Pinfold. 'That's the only way you can tell them—by their inevitable good humour.'" As if to confirm this, Captain Steerforth that night played bridge. "He smiled continuously rubber after rubber."

"Ridendo dicere verum" is the time-honoured defence for the licence allowed to the satirical writer. But can he always plead truthful comment if it hurts someone—and it always does—and, with the blood of the victim on his hands, does it help if the murderer smiles? This is one of the numerous items in the account presented to Mr. Pinfold on this ship of reckoning, the SS Caliban. The reader may amuse himself by spotting the others. It is an exercise worthy of the powers of detection of Mr. Pinfold at their best. They should not overlook the small, dark man, who dines alone at a table in day-clothes, and is the only passenger clearly not involved in the plot against Mr. Pinfold. His presence is a good omen and a promise of better times to come.

A. A. De Vitis, whose *Roman Holiday* may claim to be the first short study of Waugh's works to appear, on either side of the Atlantic, in book form, should also, I think, ponder the nature of satire. Does the satirist depict truth unvarnished, or does he exaggerate? If the latter, what is his authority to tamper with truth? De Vitis gives a valuable exposition of the use Waugh makes of the Innocent as the viewpoint of his earlier satires; against such critics as D. S. Savage, he maintains that innocence does not connote immaturity, that the standpoint is ironical. "His (Paul Pennyfeather's) innocence is tougher than life . . . his very foolishness . . . establishes the moral perspective." True, but if irony is allowed to the observer, why not also to the persons observed? Why should the African scenes in *Black Mischief* be considered to "rely for their comic value on snob appeal and on racial prejudice." If this were so, the picture of Sir Samson Courteney, British Ambassador to the Empire of Azania, a booby of the first water and a real comic bombshell, would rely for its effect on inverted snobbery and racial treason. And that of M. Ballon, his French counterpart and opponent, on anti-Gallican prejudice. Surely the raw material of comic farce is not reflected opinions, but characteristic attitudes—Anglo-Saxon attitudes, in this case—prejudices, quirks, foibles of the national temperament if you like, but not seriously held opinions. Satire passes quickly into farce; the underlying moral intent is always on the verge of frivolity; the rapier is wielded by a man with a laughing mask, by a man who can never be certain whether he is Mr. Pinfold or Basil Seal. Let Waugh, a man of honour and high principles, put on the mask of Pinfold in order to do penance; but let us not anticipate his action. Most of his "satires" are, in fact, entertainments, and are only satirical in a peripheral, fragmentary fashion; they are comic extravaganzas.

The Loved One is, perhaps, a satire, not however by reason of its method, but because its central theme, that of life and death, our deepest experience, gives it a thematic unity not possessed by the other entertainments. "Waugh studied the American attitude to death as symbolized by the cemetery," says De Vitis. Perhaps he did; but he never said anything so simple as this, to my knowledge, about *The Loved One*. The five things he had in mind, according to his prefatory note in the *Horizon* issue of the work, included: "1. Quite predominantly,

over-excitement with the scene (the cemeteries of Southern California) 5. Memento Mori." This is both wider and narrower than studying "the American attitude to death." Wider, because Forest Lawn does not have to be American—any more than Sir Ambrose Abercrombie has to be English. In fact, point 3 of Waugh's list runs: "there is no such thing as an 'American.' They are all exiles uprooted, transplanted and doomed to sterility." That is, Aimée is on this showing more American than the overt American "types," which De Vitis picks out for commendation—Mr. Heinkel, Mr. Joyboy, Kaiser, of Kaiser's Stoneless Peaches; they are like Sir Samson Courteney and Sir Ambrose Abercrombie. Narrower again, because Aimée's sad fate is an act of moral justice which transcends any judgment that this is the American way of life; it is death claiming its own—in denying death you fall victim to it, but to admit death is to have abundant life.

It is on the theme of death, indeed, that Waugh has always had his deepest, most moral insights. De Vitis speaks excellently of the death of Tony Last's son in *A Handful of Dust*—in this event Tony's Victorian dream comes to an end. One would like to hear more of Tony's own living death at the hands of Mr. Todd, and of the other, more painful occasions: the madman who sawed off Mr. Prendergast's head in *Decline and Fall*, Basil dining off Prudence in *Black Mischief*. In an unpublished defence of this latter incident, Waugh wrote, in 1933: "Several writers whose opinion I respect . . . have told me that they regard this as a disagreeable incident. It was meant to be . . ." It represented the final upsurge of barbarism in the book: Basil Seal, High Commissioner and Comptroller General of Modernization, carried away by the irresistible ground swell of chaos.

On the "Catholic novels" proper, De Vitis writes sensitively of *Brideshead*, and has some good comments on *Helena* and *Men at Arms*. But I cannot share his poor opinion of *Helena*—and, indeed, I do not think he is consistent in his argument. He considers that the account of her youth and of her old age do not add up to a credible character, and would like to have the central link—her conversion and baptism. "He [Waugh] misses a very important point of psychological interest by glibly avoiding the issue." But Waugh has never been interested in psychological introspection. This is no attempt to bring *Helena* nearer to us, over the centuries, as a human person, by the fictional attribution to her of credible feelings, but a study of a turning point in the history of the Church, and of the saint whose one historical act it was to bring this about. The character of *Helena* is, moreover, linked in youth and age by her down-to-earth realism, and by the poetic fantasy of Paris and Helen of Troy making love on the carved and fretted bed which merges into the mystical marriage with the Divine Lover on the Cross.

De Vitis ends with an analysis of *Men at Arms*, in his view Waugh's greatest triumph in that it fuses the comic brilliance of *Decline and Fall* with the serious religious considerations of *Brideshead Revisited*. To do this, he has, I think, to force a little of the religious aspect, especially in his desire to show that Crouchback is throughout "theologically pure." This is, perhaps, because he sees Crouchback as Paul Pennyfeather the Innocent with the addition of the religious dimension. Paul observes the distortion in the world and has no explanation; Guy does the same and refers it all to God. Here, surely, he overlooks two things: the one is that Guy's father, Crouchback senior, is also in the

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book with something of this role; the second is that Apthorpe is not, even tenuously, as De Vitis thinks, the instrument for the hand of Providence, but a distorted reflection of Guy himself. Between Paul Pennyfeather and Guy Crouchback has come the figure of Atwater, in *Work Suspended* (1939, published 1942), an intermediate study of the Apthorpe type. Guy's attempt to seduce Virginia, his separated wife, is ill-advised, since it is inspired by one crank, Mr. Goodall, and attempted with the brash military panache of another crank, Apthorpe.

The most serious criticism, however, to be made of this book is that it is ten years out of date. So much serious and informed work has appeared since 1945 on Waugh's writing, that a critic can no longer dash off his own impressions of the novels, and produce something worth reading. The final measure of De Vitis' work is his Bibliography, which is inaccurate, unhelpful, and grossly incomplete. Waugh's works are listed partly by the American, partly by the English editions; further, the dates of the Uniform Editions (several are wrong) give no idea of the sequence of the works. *A Handful of Dust* (1934) and *Mr. Loveday's Little Outing* (collected stories, 1936) do not appear at all. Neither does *The Holy Places* (1952), with the important Helena essay (first in *The Month*, January 1952) which should have changed De Vitis' views on the novel. The entry *Mexican Object Lesson*, 1940, should be *Robbery under Law*, 1939. *Scott-King* appeared in 1947, not in 1949. "Felix Culpa?" would appear to be an article, but is in fact a review of Graham Greene's *The Heart of the Matter*; the date is incorrect. The references to critical work—several of minimal importance—do not make it clear whether an item is a passing reference or larger section in a general work, a review, or an article. The only significant item here is D. S. Savage's article in *Focus Four*; it is strange that this should be one of the most negative accounts of Waugh's work. The following are some of the more important names omitted, apparently not even known: Hollis (a booklet, 1954), Boyle (*Irish Monthly*, 1950), Dennis (*Partisan Review*, 1943), Linklater (1947), Macaulay (*Horizon*, 1946, reprinted 1948), Menen (*The Month*, 1951), Neame (*The European*, 1953), Spender (1953), Stopp (*The Month*, 1953 and 1954). De Vitis' colleague at Purdue, R. J. Voorhees, will no doubt have drawn his attention to the *South Atlantic Review* reference, where he has confused an article on Waugh with one on Grahame Greene.

Such shoddy documentation is a serious disservice to the author of whom De Vitis thinks so highly. If he had set about preparing himself in a more scholarly fashion, one could have forgiven him the opening sketch of contemporary English literature, and the quotation from Maritain's *Art and Scholasticism*, both largely irrelevant.

FREDERICK J. STOPP

Book Reviews

At Last

Literary Criticism: A Short History. By W. K. Wimsatt, Jr., and Cleanth Brooks. Knopf. \$6.75.

THIS massive volume, modestly called "A Short History," is a godsend to the student as well as the teacher of literary criticism. Saintsbury's work on the subject has long been inadequate, and was never really what it pretended to be. Croce's historical chapters in the *Estetica* are good but brief, and devoted rather to aesthetic theory than to criticism. René Wellek, to whom the present book is dedicated, is in the process of discussing modern criticism (volumes I and II have already appeared). If the work under discussion cuts across Wellek's study, there was still much left that needed doing, and even in the chapters which traverse territory already covered by Wellek there are both a fresh approach and recourse to original materials.

Of the thirty-two chapters that comprise the book, Wimsatt claims the first twenty-five as substantially his, Brooks the modern field (chapters 26-31), though the authors state that collaboration has operated throughout. Wimsatt, then, had the lion's share of the work, and deserves credit for it. It was a more attractive job to write the chapters on contemporary criticism, which is at once more immediate and in greater need of analysis and synthesis than the older criticism, much of which is of merely archeological interest, but one should not therefore minimize the accomplishment of the latter task.

In the earlier chapters the Aristotelian contribution is particularly stressed. The reader feels that he is here dealing with the bed-rock foundation of the whole, and he is. Horace is given perhaps too much attention. The medieval development, usually slighted in histories of criticism and aesthetics (cf. Bosanquet, Croce, Gilbert, and Kuhn), is handled with fullness and penetration. With the Renaissance, however, there commences a bias in the selection and treatment of materials which, though understandable, is nevertheless real. It now becomes evident that the student of English literature and theory is kept principally in view, and it is undoubtedly true that courses in literary criticism are given mainly in departments of English (especially where there are no departments of comparative literature), so that the bias is justified in practice; yet even a short history of criticism suggests a more comprehensive coverage. Cornille is slighted, as is St. Evremond, though the influence of Ramist logic and rhetoric (the discovery of recent scholarship) is adequately taken into account. The eighteenth century is mainly England's, so far as this book is concerned, and in the main properly so, since the seminal ideas and theories of the period (e.g., preromantic and romantic ideas of imagination, taste, the sublime, original genius, historicism) did stem from England and Scotland. One should, just the same, have liked to see Diderot given more attention. The present reviewer must object, too, to the coupling of Lessing with Addison in the thirteenth chapter ("Addison and Lessing: Poetry as Pictures"). It does not seem just to dismiss Lessing's conception of the difference between painting and poetry as nothing more than "a distinction between still pictures and moving pictures."

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Lessing stresses dynamic action, not mere cinema, and has a strong hold on Aristotelian principles.

The chapter on Dr. Johnson is, as one who knows Wimsatt's special studies in this field would expect, notably good, though one should still read Wellek's rather harsh chapter on Johnson in the first volume of *Modern Criticism* as a corrective of English (and American) bias, difficult to avoid in the case of this lovable and imposing figure. Worthy of special remark is the discrimination of the meanings of "universality" in the neo-classic movement which centers in Johnson. The treatment of this important matter is almost too succinct: the philosophic problems briefly set forth certainly invited more amplification, but the scope of the volume no doubt forbade.

Major efforts, likewise, are the chapters (16 and 18) on Wordsworth and Coleridge. The first of these, on poetic diction, sets clearly before the reader the puzzling question of the relation between the language of poetry and that of ordinary life. The second, on the crucial Romantic doctrine of the imagination, enters the Sargasso of criticism, where speculation bogs down in psychological mysteries. The authors are in full control of the mass of writing on the subject, and cut through the tangles deftly. If they minimize the German influence on Coleridge (they incline to J. W. Bate's view rather than Wellek's), we can always turn to Wellek for an unabashed statement of the other side.

In their nineteenth century coverage the authors devote most attention (after the English Romantic critics) to Arnold, Tolstoy, the Art for Art's Sake movement, and Croce. It was to be expected that Matthew Arnold would be given a chapter to himself, but Ste. Beuve certainly deserved more than a cursory mention, and De Sanctis, named by Wellek as "among the greatest critics of the 19th century, and not only in Italy," is not mentioned at all. The account of the Art for Art's Sake movement (ch. 22) is excellent, tracing the school from its beginnings in Kant and the Schlegels through the French exponents (notably Baudelaire) to Pater and Wilde. But why is Rose Frances Egan's classical study of the genesis of the movement not made use of, or at least mentioned in a footnote?

The treatment accorded Benedetto Croce (ch. 23) is thorough and searching. The authors acknowledge Croce's philosophic virtuosity and consistency, but they subject it to strenuous analysis, and conclude that "what it all comes to is that the 'aesthetic' of Croce is after all not a philosophy of Art, but a philosophy of all intuitive knowing." This is one of the best critiques of Croce that the present reviewer has seen in English.

A word in general about the later chapters. Here Brooks and his collaborator had the difficult job of getting far enough away from the trees to see the forest. They chose to concentrate on major trends (tragedy and comedy, fiction and drama, symbolism, myth) and figures (Richards, Eliot, Pound). Minor names come in where they are relevant, either as followers or as critics of major: Fergusson in the chapter on drama, Ransom and Empson in connection with Richards, Hulme and Winters with Eliot and Pound.

The chapter on tragedy and comedy (25) is mainly occupied with the Germans from Hegel to Nietzsche. The treatment of comedy yields more novelties; especially good is the discussion of Arthur Koestler's theory of the comic (*Insight and Outlook*, 1949) as a discharge of nervous tension. Koestler's theory must hereafter be taken seriously in discussions of comedy.

Symbolism (ch. 26) is treated with a full examination of the French exponents: Verlaine, Baudelaire, Mallarmé, Valéry. In its emphasis it sometimes appears to be rather an essay on the Symbolist poets than on criticism; in its later sections it becomes in fact an essay on the poetry of Yeats.

Does I. A. Richards deserve two chapters (28 and 29)? The analysis of the Ricardian doctrines and methods is, however, very keen and drastic. Richards' disciple Empson is fully treated, as is J. C. Ransom. Good also is the generous discussion of Yvor Winters' critique of Eliot and Pound in ch. 29. The chapter on "Myth and Archetype" is well informed; here we necessarily pass over into the regions of psychology and cultural anthropology.

The reviewer, unless he is a man whose erudition equals that of Wimsatt plus Brooks, must learn more from this book than he can bring to it, and must be forever grateful for the wealth it offers and the light it throws. Its learned and intelligent expositions and evaluations, its clarity of vision, the anthology of *loci critici* it includes, the widely ranging bibliographical references it assembles, all make this a work which will not be done again in our generation. Its appearance in the U.S. is a major phenomenon.

VICTOR M. HAMM

Classic Treatment

T. S. Eliot's Poetry and Plays. By Grover Smith. University of Chicago Press. \$6.00.

THE BEST THING that could happen would be for Ezra Pound to do a book on T. S. Eliot. What is happening with all the books on Joyce and Eliot is that the spirit of monolithic dullness is settling down on literature. Grover Smith is to be thanked for providing many facts which we can all copy into our collected *Poems* of Eliot, as for example the relation between Mr. Apollinax and Bertrand Russell or that the cock crows in Portuguese in *The Waste Land*.

Not of the slightest concern to Grover Smith is the literary situation which Eliot transformed. The nature and function of literature and criticism in the republic of letters are likewise of no interest to him. Even the possibility of the existence of a literary or artistic community which could shape the consciousness of an epoch has been lost to his ken as much as to the minds of the old wheel-horses of literary scholarship who were with us until twenty years ago.

A book such as this proclaims that Eliot is as much a classic of English literature as Ben Jonson, and as much to be resented and ignored. But Eliot has known all along what C. S. Lewis proclaimed in his *English Literature of the Sixteenth Century*: that both England and English may be dead issues. Perhaps in these circumstances one should cultivate the tones and manners of a telephone operator who merely reports, "I can get no response from San Francisco," by way of mentioning the end of a city. Simone de Beauvoir in *Les Mandarins* reported that *la langue française* is a dead P. A. system. English and French are, as it were, obsolete mass media.

There is a kind of perfunctory, slogging quality in this work which one senses as the note of many, many books to come and which invites a reviewer to reminisce, contrapuntally, about the remarks of Wyndham Lewis on being present at the first reading of *The Waste Land*. Since then there has been a

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global thrombosis and the young have acquired long white beards.

Smith ploughs his way through all of Eliot's poems without noticing that Eliot never wrote a dull line or a dead verse, or that he was one of the most amazingly equipped literary figures of the Western world in any of its centuries. Eliot cannot hold a candle to Joyce, and yet who is to hold a candle to him? In all of the arts and sciences of the past century there appears the same amazing standard. But since when was the weatherman supposed to notice that it was a glorious day?

Perhaps the indomitable spirit of mediocrity which must at least be feigned by any Ph.D. candidate merely seems out of place in dealing with contemporary poetry or the contemporary world.

University of Toronto

H. MARSHALL McLuhan

Toward Silence

Till We Have Faces: A Myth Retold. By C. S. Lewis. Harcourt, Brace. \$4.50.

C. S. LEWIS' NEW NOVEL has been in the bookstores long enough for some impression of its reception by his admirers to be evident. The reception is not a uniform one. In my own circle of Lewis-reading friends, I know of a number who began the work with high hopes of another *Perelandra* or *That Hideous Strength*, and finished it in bewilderment and frustration. "This is not the real Lewis that we have known," they insist.

Indeed, it is not precisely the familiar Lewis. It is an older Lewis, a man now in his late fifties, and not to be identified completely with the brilliant satirist and moralist of *The Screwtape Letters*. Growing older (and in this case, I think, growing in depth) involves both its gains and its accompanying losses. The satiric genius, for example, demands a pretty clearly codified sense of morality, so that the whip of laughter need never be in doubt as to its proper targets. But in *Till We Have Faces* there is an exploration of depth, particularly the depths of divine and human love, where the clear-cut guideposts of standard morality seem less significant than other and more mysterious signs by the road. The result: less satire, less wit, less humor than Lewis' public has come to expect. The reading public being what it is, and wishing a writer to provide during his whole lifetime what first gave it joy, naturally reacts here and there with disappointment.

But enough by way of prologue. In *Till We Have Faces*, C. S. Lewis, instead of fashioning a plot of his own, has taken one of the most evocative myths bequeathed from antiquity, the story of Cupid and Psyche. In our age, neurotically over-emphasizing literary "originality," this is a decision made more rarely than it ought to be. I question whether it is any more a major writer's function to invent a plot than to invent a philosophy or a religion. His creative energy and insight can much better be devoted to reworking the archetypal plots that the race has collectively put into his hands. At any rate, that is precisely what Lewis has done, as is immediately obvious to anyone who has read the standard version of Cupid and Psyche in that curious second-century Latin work, *The Golden Ass* of Apuleius. The plot is essentially the same, but the whole "feel," the quality of vision, is utterly different. Apuleius was out to tell a good story, and it happened to be one with a peculiar innocence, contrasting admirably with

the bawdry and roguery of the greater portion of his book. Lewis has made of the tale much more than a love story; it is also a pilgrim's progress, an analysis of the way of purgation and illumination.

To accomplish this change of emphasis, Lewis has made several important alterations. One which rings so right that it is hard to believe it is not a part of the primal myth is in the character of the palace in which Cupid and Psyche live. In *Till We Have Faces*, the palace is visible only to eyes of faith, eyes that are prepared to see it. To those unwilling to see, such as Psyche's older sister, Orual, there is nothing visible but the wilderness, and the joyous Psyche is a ragged castaway.

Another change is that Orual, the elder sister, becomes as crucial a character as Psyche. In some ways she is more important. The story is told as she views it; she and her doings occupy more pages than Psyche. And it is she who experiences in her own life the agony and the agonizing joy of a steadily deepening insight into her own being and the reality of the gods who confront her. It is the story of a human being whose protective illusions are stripped away one by one till she stands naked in the eyes of the gods and sees herself as they see her. And in her anguish of knowledge lies her salvation.

During most of the novel, Orual, hideously ugly and always veiled, is queen of the dark and sinister land of Glome. Two of the most memorable characters who share the stage with her are the faithful Bardia, her right-hand-man who works himself to death in her service, and the Fox, a captive Greek who tutors Orual in a sunny rationalism which later she must go beyond in order to find herself and the gods.

Of all Lewis' books, this is the most difficult, and decidedly the most difficult to summarize briefly. I can best suggest its quality by saying that it resembles G. K. Chesterton less and Charles Williams more than any of the author's previous work. Perhaps it is true that all religious insight, as it grows and deepens, moves toward music, liturgy, or silence. The prose writer finds the words bending and breaking with the burden they must carry. Lewis has not reached that point, but *Till We Have Faces* represents a far stride toward a direct preception of the love that moves the sun and the other stars.

Beloit College

CHAD WALSH

From the Files

J.-K. Huysmans: *Lettres inédites à Edmond de Goncourt*. Edited by Pierre Lambert. Paris: Librairie Nizet.

CONVINCED OF HIS OWN importance and the interest future researchers would have in him, Edmond de Goncourt treasured virtually every scrap of paper that carried his name. When a young novelist named J.-K. Huysmans wrote to him toward the end of 1876, Goncourt, after reading the letter, carefully placed it in his files. Over the next twenty years Huysmans wrote another forty letters to Goncourt, which the latter of course duly catalogued. Almost half were written to thank him for books he sent the younger author. Nine deal with Huysmans' own books or questions on literature in general. A few contain disquisitions on various subjects. The rest are brief answers to invitations to visit Auteuil, in which Huysmans graciously declines.

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Huysmans' first visits to Goncourt were enjoyable enough. They admired one another's books, but they soon learned they were at loggerheads over just about everything else. Two such diverse personalities probably would have fallen out had they tried to form ties of real friendship. Goncourt liked to have Huysmans call, although after a while Huysmans found even short visits supremely boring. Nonetheless, they constituted something of a mutual literary admiration society. Huysmans, for example, once went so far as to inform Goncourt: "the urge to write came from reading your books." Goncourt, in turn, who was usually chary of praise, lavished it upon Huysmans; for the author of *La Fille Elisa* was, in the early days of their friendship, desirous of weaning Huysmans away from his mentor Zola, whose reputation Goncourt envied and whose reputation he believed Huysmans would some day equal. Accordingly, as early as 1877, Goncourt added his young admirer's name to a list of writers who were to be the charter members of the Goncourt Academy, an organization its namesake planned to institute officially in his will.

With the passage of years Goncourt revised his list many times. Constantly worried over the men he had chosen to help insure his posthumous reputation, he frequently occupied himself with the dropping of some members and the adding of others. Each change moved Huysmans into ascendancy. In 1896, at Goncourt's death, Huysmans, because his name was longest on the list of "academicians," became president. Incumbent upon him in his new office were Goncourt's explicit instructions to be carried out before the Academy would benefit from the sale of the Auteuil art treasures. Much of what indirectly led up to Huysmans' presidency is found in these letters.

The correspondence is hardly belles-lettres, however. The Huysmans that Léon Bloy once described as the writer who drags "his images by the heels or hair up and down the worm-eaten staircases of terrified syntax" is not found in these letters. Few writers ever had a richer or rarer vocabulary or could manipulate words with the consummate virtuosity of Huysmans, but one would hardly suspect it from this correspondence. That these letters are somewhat pedestrian may be accounted for by the conjecture that Huysmans was always far too busy polishing his manuscripts to trouble with his missives. It probably never occurred to him that his letters to Goncourt, or to anyone else, would ever be published in separate volumes.

More valuable, moreover, than what the letters contain are the annotations of their editor, Pierre Lambert. His lengthy notes are with but one or two exceptions longer than the letters themselves. During his years as secretary-general of the *Société Huysmans*, Lambert has been zealously collecting Huysmansiana; and from his storehouse of documents he has drawn his informative explications. In addition to this volume he has published *J.-K. Huysmans: Lettres inédites à Emile Zola* (1953). At the present time he is preparing for publication still another volume of Huysmans' correspondence, to be entitled *J.-K. Huysmans: Lettres à Leon et Marguerite Le Claire*. When it appears it too will no doubt contain his eximious annotations. Huysmansians and all serious students of late nineteenth-century French literature await its publication.

St. John's University

GEORGE A. CEVASCO

Broken Promise

Catholic Literary Opinion in the Nineteenth Century. By Philip H. Vitale. Academy Library Guild. \$3.75.

FEW BOOKS have promised more in their titles: it is a task of some urgency to present the literary views of Newman, De Vere, Patmore, Hopkins, Alice Meynell, Francis Thompson, Lionel Johnson, and Orestes Brownson. And how grateful we should be for a study that would trace their critical ideas and examine their aesthetics—and perhaps also relate their opinions to the main streams of nineteenth-century criticism.

But few books have given so little of what they advertised in their title. There is no introductory essay, so necessary (one must feel) in order to survey the area and at least present the problem. Instead there are only Supplementary Readings of each individual's writings, and some Exercises following each selection. The two-page Bibliography at the end is very elementary: there is, for example, no reference to Alba Warren's penetrating scholarship, *English Poetic Theory, 1825-1865*, or to many important studies of the individuals here included.

An anthology of Catholic literary opinion would be valuable in itself, but the texts here presented are not dependable. Not merely is the book badly set up (with lines of quoted verse appearing as main text and with an astonishing number of misprints), but switches of italics and punctuation, and expansions of contractions ("Mr." expanded to "Mister") appear without being explained as editorial policy. In one essay alone, first nine pages and later twenty-five pages are omitted, with no indications of place or extent of cutting.

We must acknowledge the usefulness of this enterprise in pointing to the wealth of Catholic literary opinion in the nineteenth century—a wealth surely not unknown to readers of this magazine and to Catholic teachers of literature—but we can only hope that this compilation will soon be replaced by a dependable and critical definitive study and anthology.

University of Notre Dame

R. J. SCHOECK

Compliment Accepted

Dublin's Joyce. By Hugh Kenner. Indiana University Press. \$5.75.

Joyce: The Man, the Work, the Reputation. By Marvin Magalaner and Richard M. Kain. New York University Press. \$5.00.

The Early Joyce: The Book Reviews: 1902-1903. Edited by Stanislaus Joyce and Ellsworth Mason. Mamalujo Press. \$1.50.

James Joyce: Epiphanies. Edited by O. A. Silverman. Lockwood Library: University of Buffalo. \$5.00.

Joyce et Mallarmé. By David Hayman. Paris: Lettres Modernes. 2 vols. \$4.50.

Joyce and Aquinas. By William T. Noon, S.J. Yale University Press. \$3.75.

KENNER'S *JOYCE* is an indispensable book. There is no book on Joyce or Eliot that does not contain some new fact or insight that is helpful. But Kenner sets himself the job of showing us how to read Joyce by showing us how he worked. That Joyce should have paid his century the compliment of taking the reader into the creative act was prophetic of the challenge which our

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technology has presented to the globe itself. The reader's response has been a gaunt whisper: "Another compliment like that and I'm finished." But Kenner shows us how we can accept the compliment and enjoy it. Since nobody who is interested in Joyce at all is going to pass by Kenner's book there is no need to detail his approach. Basically, he differs from all other commentators in stressing the total relevance of Joyce's Roman Catholicism to his art. The stress on "Roman" implies Joyce's radical use of reason as a spiritual faculty and not as a mere instrument. It is Joyce's awareness of reason in this plenary sense that determines his attitude to the verbal universe. Like Pound and Eliot, Joyce assumed that verbal art in the electronic age had to assume the responsibility of precision and power equivalent to the physical sciences. His work simply shoulders the burden both of the alchemy of the word and of the alchemy of history in an act of inclusive consciousness. Kenner shows us how he proceeded in this task which he accomplished triumphantly. It is no reflection on anything but ordinary human limitations that the entire world has not responded to this feat which concerns its health so nearly.

Magalaner and Kain have taken a more modest bite in launching themselves upon the Joycean seas. This is the first PMLA type of work on Joyce. It illustrates how Ph. Deism is going to find Joyce the richest uranium field in the history of human effort. We might as well build new shelves at once to hold the commentaries that are even now moving off the assembly lines of print. It already seems natural to devote an entire graduate course to Joyce, and *The Joyce Review* has begun to appear. Magalaner and Kain offer a survey of Joyce comment to date plus a bibliography of periodical essays on Joyce which is quite helpful.

The Early Joyce book reviews are mostly from the London *Daily Express*. Joyce was an avid newspaper reader all his life, never regarding the press as anything less than a powerful new art form. The tone of the reviews is kindly and urbane; their subjects range from *Buddhism* and Ibsen's *Catilina* to Lady Gregory's *Poets and Dreamers*. Of this latter he says: "In her new book she has left legends and heroic youth far behind, and has explored in a land almost fabulous in its sorrow and senility." And: "out of the material and spiritual battle which has gone so hardly with her Ireland has emerged with many memories of beliefs, and with one belief—a belief in the incurable ignobility of the forces which have overcome her."

The Buffalo edition of the *Epiphanies* is a Joyce collector's item issued in 500 copies. There are twenty-two epiphanies, and notes which offer correspondences from his later work. The epiphanies are very limp compared with the later work, but are structured situations, having the proportions of complex dramatic metaphors. It is obvious that Joyce at this early period was training his faculties of perception to obtain riches from the most casual and ordinary matters.

David Hayman's *Joyce et Mallarmé* at last provides an apparatus of actual texts from Mallarmé which are discussed with detailed reference to texts from Joyce. He is well aware that it is *Un Coup de Dés*, the last work of Mallarmé, which Joyce found most useful in his work. The main difference between the method of Mallarmé and that of Joyce in *Finnegans Wake* is that Joyce does with words themselves what Mallarmé had done with letters, punctuation, syntax. Mallarmé stayed with conventional words. Joyce fabricated freely for each phrase.

It is specifically the theme and techniques of suggestion which Hayman considers in Mallarmé and Joyce. But he hits upon some new critical insights right in the middle of the road which has been tramped by so many, as in the matter of the keys in *Ulysses*: "During the whole day's action of *Ulysses*, Bloom and Stephen are men without keys. Bloom forgot his in the morning. Stephen handed over the key of the tower at the request of Mulligan . . . which reinforces the father-son theme." To be without keys is to be without country and without home. Hayman enlarges on this and many other matters very ably.

Father Noon's *Joyce and Aquinas*, besides reviewing the entire epiphany question, opens up the trinitarian theme as Joyce has used it from Aquinas. He suggests that there is some Joycean irony in young Stephen's presentation of Aquinas in the *Portrait* and that the aesthete's stress on process of aesthetic apprehension was not Joyce's own interest at the time of writing. Rather, as the Zurich notebook says, "he had found in practice another triad that would be more decisive for mature work: 'Good diction: tria-metaphor, antithesis, energy.'" Joyce had, of course, made quite clear in the *Portrait* that the aesthetic was not a poetic.

It is characteristic of the careful examination that Father Noon makes that he has constantly to brush off many current views of Joyce: "Joyce is about as far from nihilism as you can go and still write novels and not 'tracts for the times.'" Again, "The self-imposed rationalist limits of the comic artist may not allow him to affirm (or deny) the truth of the Catholic's faith in Mary, the Mother of God. His laughter at the behavior of Catholics like Gerty, who do seriously affirm such to be their faith, is however an excellent comic purgative . . . The reasonable Catholic is not so much likely to be offended as to feel the need to make a serious examination of his own conscience." Of *Finnegans Wake*: "The avowal of personal faith is not explicit in the book and seems in the main to be absent, but the whole mythic material in the poetry revolves around a core of theological acceptance." "Joyce never committed himself as a poet to the 'Thomistic system,' any more than he did to any other philosophical system . . . He took from each system he encountered what proved most helpful to him as a writer . . . Sometimes he qualified what he found; often he dramatized it, earnestly or ironically; almost always he combined it with something else. The fact that Joyce found Aquinas as helpful as he did is at one and the same time a sign, it would seem, of the *philosophia perennis* and of Joyce's own vast resourcefulness."

University of Toronto

H. MARSHALL McLUHAN

Surveying the Borders

Frontiers in American Catholicism: Essays on Ideology and Culture. By Walter J. Ong, S.J. Macmillan. \$2.50.

IN an age of transformation like ours the most interesting areas of life are located at the borderlines, the "cultural perimeters," as Ong calls them; it is here that impulses emerge which lead to changes in socio-historical reality; it is here that energies of varying qualities fuse into new types of action-producing forces; it is here that the classification systems and conceptual nets with

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which mankind has always been trying to "catch" reality break and, torn and ripped, become powerless and meaningless; but it is also here at the frontiers that new syntheses and new concepts arise. Ideas and cultures, differing from each other, do produce something new whenever they meet in friendly or in hostile encounter. We discover more than once that different approaches to life and their corresponding ideologies can, in spite (or on account?) of their basic distinctiveness, penetrate each other and thus promote the common good.

Ong's undertaking to develop a comprehensive self-interpretation of American Catholicism (and this implies one of American culture as such) has a felicitous start and opens vistas we had been scarcely aware of, precisely because he uses frontier situations as his intellectual work tool for the purpose of analyzing such historical complexities as spiritual life in our present-day society. There is, in particular as a problem for American Catholicism, the meeting of European tradition and American culture; there is the frontiersman himself, much alive even today, as the human type who goes ahead with aplomb, optimism, and thirst for action but who, at the same time, is somewhat afraid of changes and shows a strong inclination toward conservatism; there is the borderline on which the world view of business and that of speculative philosophy come in touch with each other, or—even broader—where practical rationality tries to deal with religion, either in an uncertain way of self-consciousness, or with the intention of incorporating religion into its own system. There finally is as a most general phenomenon the provocative closeness of privacy and public, of individual and mass culture, with reciprocities whose study in these days makes the main content of the social sciences. The humanities, and especially literary criticism, cannot, in view of these perimetric revolutions which we are witnessing today, simply stay away or withdraw into isolation; actually they are more and more showing a trend toward interdisciplinary cooperation with other sciences. The book under review is a most remarkable specimen of an effort to study ideas synthetically by combining the approaches of the humanities with those of the natural and social sciences. The fact that the author himself has come from literature and is a professor of English makes him an ideal messenger to bring attitudes and viewpoints of the sciences to the doorsteps of the "humanists" and the representatives of the "belles lettres." He certainly will be received with less suspicion than would be a social scientist saying the same things and interpreting American Catholicism the same way Ong is doing.

There is no systematic unity in the book; four of its six chapters have been written for special occasions. As a result the reader finds himself taken by the author to a variety of starting points. Almost each time it is a new beginning, and unavoidably this leads to repetitions. But the lack of a unified method is a great asset in this case. Ong's mind is so versatile and mobile that almost each sentence contains a new idea or an unusual reference. Thus the reader is kept in a state of excitement, his pedestrian mentality is stirred up to such a high speed that turmoil would result from it were it not for Ong's ability to reproduce again and again the same theme in numerous variations. Having finished the book, the reader will be grateful for having been spared an attempt toward a rigid system for a line of research that is still in flux and only in its early stages of conceptualization.

The first chapter, under the title "The American Catholic Complex," deals (among many other aspects) with the ambivalent attitude of the American

Catholic toward the European tradition; he associates himself only "with what is immobilized" in Europe and does not dare to come in touch with the dynamic forces of European Catholicism. "The Catholics of America have decided that from Europeans they will gain their assurance." This attitude leads, however, to an overrating of Europe and creates a sort of inferiority complex among the Americans regarding their own achievements, among which Ong counts foremost the parochial school system. Problems of mass culture, the small attention given to a possible élite, paradoxes like the use of modern advertising techniques for developing a retreat movement, and many other features of American life are discussed.

The third chapter apparently is the outcome of the startling experience, which an observing traveller cannot avoid having, of the deep-going contrasts of European and American Catholicism. Ong, who studied in France, concentrates on a most fruitful comparison between France and the United States. This essay shows what a wealth of findings a scholar in cultural analysis can produce if he has been brought up with the nourishing food of literature, linguistic studies, and history, and thus applies social science against the background of a humanistic education. How much can the social scientist learn from Ong! One sentence that pretty well summarizes the discoveries of the author may be quoted: "The irony in the French . . . Catholic intellectual situation is to be found in the curious mixture of consciously cultivated historical sense and subconscious reactionism, inherent in the Continental Revolutionary tradition itself, just as the irony in the American Catholic situation is to be found in the nearly total absence of a conscious historical sense despite the other-directed character's imperturbably practical adjustment to change."

Back to American Catholicism itself, the second, fifth, and sixth chapters in a certain way follow the same direction, examining the relationship of Catholicism to the forces which dominate contemporary life, that is, to business and technology. There actually is a contradiction between poverty ("both of spirit and reality . . . portrayed in Catholic teaching as a blessing") and the world of business. But, as Ong believes and tries to demonstrate, the Church "feels that she can do something to make her spirit felt in it," i.e., in the commercial sphere. In the chapter on "Technology and the Humanist Frontiers," Ong interprets the technological era ("an incident in the history of mankind") as an age which "is part of the great and mysterious evolution of the universe devised by God." It is Ong's historical sense which permits him to develop this approach, and it is the same sense that makes him apply the evolutionary theory of Fr. Teilhard de Chardin, that great genius whose writings are now being published, to a description of man's advance in history. Technology thus is given a meaningful place; it is not resentfully pictured as a phase of decline of the spirit. If technology is looked at in this way, then it becomes obvious that our time challenges the Church, and foremost within her the intellectual leaders, to draw the consequences from living in that historical period which is our time. What is needed, according to Ong, is "to envision a real Christian *mystique* of technology and science. That is, it needs to develop a real spiritual insight into technology and science which at least attempts to discover and discuss the philosophical and theological meaning of the technological and scientific trend which marks our age. It is certain that a mature understanding of this trend can never be arrived at until the American Catholic sensibility can transcend the improv-

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erished frames of thought which can discern in post-Renaissance . . . developments nothing more than the progressive secularization and materialization of society."

This last remark leads us to chapter four, "The Renaissance Myth and the American Catholic Mind." It is an essay quite apart from the others. For one thing, it is far more scholarly in its technique and make-up. Moreover, it is not self-sufficient but needs verification, which is given in the many references of the footnotes. It is scarcely possible to summarize its content. And incidentally, each friend of *Renaissance* should read it carefully. Ong produces two weighty reasons for his reserved and suspicious attitude toward "renascences": we cannot revive the past, and—even more important—such renascences "imply a cyclic view of history seemingly contrary to the Christian historical sense, which is developmental and evolutionary." Searching self-evaluation against the background of these so often misunderstood concepts and their criticism by Ong will certainly advance genuine movements like *Renaissance* (in singular) to ever increasing productivity. Ong, in this essay, is disturbed by a tendency, strong among American Catholics, at the same time to advocate Renaissance humanism and medieval scholasticism. His purpose is, on the one side, to show the scientific and not theological character of scholastic philosophy ("we know so little directly of medieval scholastic philosophy"), and on the other side, to underline the antiscientific character of the Renaissance. In this connection he has the most pertinent observations to make on such matters as the ideology of the written word, the impact of the invention of the printing press, and the involuntary aid which Renaissance humanists gave to the emergence of active interest in the vernaculars. Many conclusions can be drawn from his "debunking" of the Renaissance myth which will prove highly applicable to the action-decisions which we shall have to make in our endeavors to improve our liberal arts education.

It is to be hoped that Ong's book will serve as stimulant for continuous research on American Catholicism and its trends through intimate cooperation of the humanities and the social sciences.

Marquette University.

RUDOLPH E. MORRIS

A Word From New Zealand

The Fire and the Anvil: Notes on Modern Poetry. By James K. Baxter. New Zealand University Press.

ALTHOUGH this brief book contains but three chapters, "The Criticism of Poetry," "The Creative Mask," and "Symbolism in New Zealand Poetry," it should be thought provoking for Catholic writers and critics.

What makes it worthy of consideration by them is not specifically what it says about the situation of poetry in New Zealand but rather what it says about the Christian poet's approach to reality, for example: "The Christian doctrine of the Fall should make the vision of a Christian poet more real and exact: he or she should be able to present a lifelike portrait of Fallen Man. But far too much of the religious poetry produced in this country shows a basic timidity in regard to problems of human suffering; and the criticism of a maturer approach to such themes comes frequently from a religious quarter."

RENAISSANCE

Baxter's discussion of a few lines from a poem by St. John of the Cross is stimulating. He shows how the poem is "the response of the entire man, spirit and animal, conscious and subconscious" so that, when we have finished reading the saint's poems, we feel moved to say, "This is substantial man; not a mere ghost blown upon by *Agape*, but hide, hair, and inward quality of the human creature."

But perhaps the part of the book which will provoke most criticism and thought is the discussion on creative freedom (p. 46 ff.). It would be interesting to see some of his ideas commented on by other Christian thinkers. The following statements taken out of context may be misleading but they indicate the nature of his ideas:

Lacking a Christian humanism, men have turned to agnostic or atheistic humanism for an understanding of their problems. Maritain, von Hügel, and a few novelists excepted, there is hardly in modern literature a Christian humanism worth the name. Perhaps I speak in ignorance. But to have an effect on the course of modern secular thought a Christian apologist has to recognize that Karl Barth, or the Council of Trent, has not said the last word about human nature, and that Dostoevski or even Sartre may shed light on our problems. Modern man desires as much to be delivered from an uncreative society as from his sins.

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Though the Church has understood and given scope to man's ethical nature, she has left in the main man's creativity unexplored and uncultivated; and this seems all the more unfortunate to those who believe (as I do) that the medieval conception of human nature is more real and stable than the Hellenic or the modern.

Because James K. Baxter is a poet himself, his understanding of poetry makes his criticism of New Zealand poetry seem valid. Perusal of his thought in this small volume on the work of modern poets makes one wish for the opportunity to see some of his own creative work.

LUISE MARCH

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